LETTERS

ON

EGYPT,

WITH A

Parallel between the Manners of its ancient and modern Inhabitants, the present State, the Commerce, the Agriculture, and Government of that Country;

AND AN

Account of the Descent of St. Lewis at Damietta:

EXTRACTED FROM

JOINVILLE, AND ARABIAN AUTHORS.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS.

By Mr. SAVARY,

Author of the Life *of* Mahomet, and *Translator of the Coran.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

MONSIEUR,

Brother to the King of

FRANCE.

MONSEIGNEUR,

THE favourable reception with which you have honoured my former works, encourages me to publiſh the obſervations I had an opportunity of making in the courſe of my travels. If your Highneſs will deign to permit me to prefix your name, my wiſhes will be complete. I ſhall eſteem that favour as an aſſurance

of the public approbation, and ſhall the leſs regret thoſe obſtacles, which ſuſpended my zeal at the moment that I was about to undertake more important inquiries.

I am,

With the moſt profound reſpect,

Your Highneſs's moſt obedient,

and moſt humble ſervant,

SAVARY.

PRE-

PREFACE.

TRAVELS are the moſt inſtructive ſchool of man. It is by travelling that he acquires a knowledge of his fellow creatures; it is by living amongſt different people, by ſtudying their manners, their religion, and government, that he finds a point of compariſon which enables him to judge of the manners, the religion, and government of his own country. Surrounded by the prejudices of education, enſlaved by cuſtom, until he quits his native country, he views other nations only through an opake medium, which, varying their forms and colours to his ſight, muſt neceſſarily induce a falſe judgment of the objects. He will be aſtoniſhed at their errors, although he himſelf pays a tribute to others, to the full

as

as ſtriking; he will laugh at the abſurdity of their cuſtoms, himſelf a ſlave to as great extravagancies.

But after examining with deliberate attention, the manners and the genius of different people, after calculating the preciſe influence of education, laws, and climate, on their natural and moral qualities, he will extend the ſphere of his ideas, reflexion will throw off the yoke of prejudice, and break the bonds with which cuſtom has enchained his reaſon. It is then that, looking towards his own country, the bandage will drop from his eyes, the erroneous opinions he has there formed will vaniſh, and every thing will bear a different aſpect.

Before he ſets out on his travels, it is neceſſary that he ſhould be thoroughly acquainted with geography and hiſtory. The former will point out the local theatre of great events, the latter will recall them to his memory. Enlightened by this two-fold luminary, in travelling through the eaſtern world, the ſcene of the moſt aſtoniſhing revolutions, which have more than once changed the ſurface of the globe,

globe, every object will be animated under his footſteps. The marbles, the ruins, the very mountains will ſpeak to his underſtanding and his heart. Here, under a rude bed of brambles, he will read the following words, with which his country honoured the manes of a hero: *Sta, Viator, Heroem calcas.* That rock, whoſe precipice projects over the profound abyſſes of the ſea, will recall to his memory the unhappy fate of that deſpairing lover, whoſe ſublime and animated verſes deſervedly procured her the title of the tenth muſe. Thoſe ruins, the ſad remains of two celebrated republics, will revive the recollection of man, ennobled by the love of liberty, his enlarged ſoul, and all the faculties of mind and body in the higheſt ſtate of perfection. What multiplied compariſons between the paſt and preſent ſituation of human affairs will recur to his imagination! How immenſe the chain of events he has to purſue! But he will content himſelf with marking the great leading features, and with laying before his reader thoſe ſtriking circumſtances, wherein

wherein the paſt and the preſent are illuſtrated, and brought into contact, without being confounded together.

At the ſight of thoſe ſuperb monuments that Egypt ſtill poſſeſſes, his reflections will turn on the character of a people, whoſe works alone, of all the ancient nations, have braved the ravages of time. What muſt have been that people, who ſeemed to have laboured only for immortality, and from whom Orpheus, Homer, Herodotus, and Plato, went in ſearch of thoſe different branches of knowledge, with which they enriched their country? He will regret, that all the efforts of the learned have proved ineffectual to lift up the veil of the numerous hieroglyphics diſperſed through that rich region. The knowledge of theſe characters would illuſtrate ancient hiſtory, and furniſh a ray of light perhaps to penetrate that darkneſs which covers the firſt ages of the world.

Become a citizen of the univerſe, he will riſe ſuperior to partiality and opinion, and, in deſcribing cities and countries, his pen will adopt no other guide than truth.

But

But above all, let him not, like too many travellers, make himself the principal figure in his paintings, nor throw a glare of light around himself, whilst he leaves in the shade the other personages on the canvas. Let him appear without affectation, whether with respect to knowledge of his subject, or for the purpose of giving weight to his narrative. Such are the requisites for the man who would profit by his travels. Such are the principles he should deem essential.

To the necessary information, and to the genius of observation, he must unite also that lively, profound, and penetrating sensibility, which alone can make his remarks or writings interesting. If he is not affected on beholding the spot where the great Pompey was assassinated on his landing near Pelusium; if the wonders of Egypt have not struck him with astonishment and admiration; if he has not lamented over the august ruins of Alexandria, and over the irreparable loss of 400,000 volumes, devoured by the flames; if he has not felt his breast inflamed by

the noble fire of enthuſiaſm, at the ſight of the ruins of Troy, of Sparta, and of Athens, let him not think of writing. Nature never formed him to tranſmit to his fellow-creatures thoſe great impreſſions, which are inſpired only by ſuch great objects.

I preſume to think, that I have experienced ſuch feelings as to render travels intereſting; but the public muſt judge, of the execution. Should the reader of theſe letters accompany me with pleaſure; ſhould he be ſtruck with the accuracy of the deſcriptions, and derive inſtruction from the geographical and hiſtorical details; ſhould the memorable events I recall to his remembrance appear to him to be judiciouſly diſpoſed; ſhould the parallel of ancient and modern manners ſeem to be traced with judgment and reflection, my wiſhes will be fulfilled, and I ſhall eſteem the fatigues, the dangers, the labours, I have undergone, only as a ſubject of conſolation.

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*** All the Measures here given are French. The French foot is to the English foot as 135 to 144. A French toise is six French feet, or six feet and three-eighths English.

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LETTERS ON EGYPT.

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A general deſcription of Egypt, and of the changes which it has undergone from the moſt remote antiquity to the preſent time. The reader will here find an account of the topography of the country, and a detail of the labours of the ancient kings in confining the channel of the Nile, with the original formation of the Delta, and its gradual enlargement.

To Mr. L. M.

Alexandria, the 24th July, 1777.

YOU complain, Sir, of my ſilence; you call upon me to make good my promiſe. "Where," ſay you, "are thoſe portraits of the Oriental manners that I expected from your taſte for obſervation? What! for

three years have you been travelling in Egypt, without writing me one word of that moſt celebrated of all the countries in the world?"

Such are your reproaches. Recollect the advice you gave me on quitting Paris; you will there find my juſtification. "Young Man, you are going into a fo-
"reign country, where you will ſee new
"men. Obſerve the influence of climate,
"the power of religion, the imperious
"law of ancient cuſtoms, and the opera-
"tions of deſpotiſm on weak mortals;
"from them you will diſcover the hiſtory
"of their vices and their virtues; to faci-
"litate this ſtudy learn the Oriental lan-
"guages, converſe with the Greeks, the
"Turks, and the Arabs; live amongſt them,
"and, to ſee them as they really are, leave
"your prejudices behind you in France.
"Try to paint the people you ſee after Na-
"ture. Let the Turk ſtrictly reſemble
"himſelf, and do not give us a repre-
"ſentation of Paris at Grand Cairo."

Such were the precepts dictated by your wiſdom; your reaſon made me adopt them;

your

your friendſhip rendered them dear to me, and they have remained engraven on my memory. Three years travels, attended with many difficulties and much labour, have been conſecrated to my deſire of reducing them to practice. By writing to you ſooner, I ſhould have been leſs obedient to thoſe precepts.

It appears to me proper firſt to give you an account of the limits of Egypt, and of ſuch revolutions as time and the labours of man have produced in that country. The map that accompanies this letter, will ſerve you as a guide, and I have added my own obſervations to the authority of the ancients, and to the diſcoveries of Father Sicard, of Pocock, of Nieburh, and of Danville. This laſt geographer, whoſe learned criticiſm could diſtinguiſh the truth amidſt the numerous contradictions of travellers, has often been of great ſervice to me. I never quit him but in places where it is impoſſible not to go aſtray without having been a perſonal ſpectator.

Egypt is bounded on the north by the Mediterranean, on the ſouth by a chain

of mountains which ſeparates it from Nubia; the Red Sea, and the Iſthmus of Suez form its eaſtern limits; and it is terminated to the weſtward by the deſerts of Lybia, in the midſt of which ſtood the temple of Jupiter Ammon. Its greateſt length is from Sienna, ſituated under the tropic of Cancer, to cape *Burlos*, which, forming the moſt advanced point of the Delta, almoſt terminates the 32d degree of latitude. This diſtance is about two hundred and twenty five leagues.

Its greateſt breadth is ſixty-eight leagues, drawing a right line from the ruins of Peluſa, to the tower of the Arabs, formerly called *Tapoſiris*. This meaſure agrees with that of the ancients *(a)*, which made the breadth

(a) Diodorus Siculus and Strabo allow the baſe of the Delta, which extended from Peluſium to Canopus, now called *Alboukir*, 1300 furlongs, which may be eſtimated at 54 leagues; add to this 14 leagues from Canopa to the tower of the Arabs, you will have 68 leagues. Herodotus reckons 60 ſchenes, or 80 leagues from Mount Caſius to the gulph of Plintina, where *Tapoſiris* was ſituated. Mount Caſius is 12 leagues to the

breadth of the Delta fifty-four leagues from Peluſium to Canopus, and fourteen from Canopa to Tapoſiris.

Egypt is divided into Upper and Lower; the firſt is only a long valley, which begins at Sienna, and ends at Grand Cairo. Two chains of mountains, which take their riſe from the laſt cataract, form the vaſt contours of that country. Their direction is from ſouth to north, until they reach the latitude of Cairo, where ſeparating to the right and left, one of them takes the direction of mount *Colzoum*, the other terminates in banks of ſand near to Alexandria. The former is compoſed of high and ſteep rocks, the latter of ſandy hillocks, over a bed of calcareous ſtone. Beyond theſe

the eaſtward of Peluſa; by ſubtracting this number from the former, there will equally remain 68 leagues from Peluſa to Tapoſiris. It is evident that the two geographers have meaſured the ſame extent of country in a right line, and not in following, like Herodotus, the baſe of the Delta; for, from the time of Herodotus to their days, that part of Egypt had already increaſed by the immenſe quantity of ſand accumulated by the Nile; and if they had followed the ſea coaſt, they would have found a conſiderable augmentation.

mountains, are deſerts bounded by the Red Sea on the eaſt, and on the weſt by Africa; in the midſt of them is that long plain which is no more than nine leagues broad, where it is the wideſt. It is there that the Nile flows between two inſurmountable barriers. Now, ſmooth and tranquil, he ſlowly purſues the courſe traced out by nature and by art; now, an impetuous torrent, reddened with the ſands of Ethiopia, he ſwells, and breaks over his boundaries, and overflows the country, which he covers with his waters for the ſpace of two hundred leagues. It is in this celebrated valley, that mankind firſt lighted the torch of the ſciences, whoſe radiance diffuſing itſelf over Greece *(b)*, has ſucceſſively illuminated the reſt of the world. This valley is ſtill as fertile as in the beſt days of

(b) Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, ſay preciſely that the Greeks derived the greateſt part of their knowledge from Egypt. It was from thence that Orpheus brought mythology, the daughters of Danaus, and the myſteries of Ceres. It was there that their philoſophers ſtudied aſtronomy, and their legiſlators the principles of government.

Thebes;

Thebes; but it is leſs cultivated, and its famous cities are laid level with the duſt. Deſpotiſm and ignorance ſeated on the throne of laws, and arts, keep them buried and in ruins.

Lower Egypt comprehends all that country between Cairo, the Mediterranean, the Iſthmus of Suez, and Lybia. This immenſe plain preſents on the borders of its parching ſands, a ſtrip of lands cultivated along the canals of the river, and in the middle the triangular iſland, to which the Greeks gave the name of the Delta. It is formed by the two branches of the Nile, which ſeparating at *Batn el Bakara, the Cow's Belly*, fall into the ſea below Damietta and Roſetta. This iſland, the moſt fertile in the world, has loſt much of its extent, ſince it was formerly bounded by Canopa and Peluſium *(c)*. The ravages of its conquerors having overthrown the eaſtern bulwark of Egypt, the cultivators of the lands, too much expoſed to the inroads of the Arabs, have withdrawn into the inte-

(c) Strabo, lib. 17.

rior parts of the country. The canals which uſed to convey fertility with their waters, are now filled. The earth, no longer watered, and continually expoſed to the burning ardour of the ſun, is converted into a barren ſand. In thoſe places where formerly were ſeen rich fields, and flouriſhing towns *(d)*, on the Peluſiac, the Tanitic, and the Mendeſian branches, which all ſtrike out from the canal of Damietta, nothing is to be found at this day but a few miſerable hamlets, ſurrounded by date trees, and by deſerts. Theſe once navigable canals *(e)* are now no more than a vain reſemblance of what they were; they have no communication with lake Menzall, but what is merely temporary, on the ſwelling of the Nile; they are dry the remainder of the year. By deepening them, by removing the mud depoſited by the river ſince the Turks have made themſelves maſters of Egypt, the country they paſs

(d) Bubaſta, Peluſium, Phacuſa, and all the towns which were in the eaſtern part of the Delta, are totally deſtroyed.

(e) The Peluſiatic, the Tanitic, and Mendeſian branches were formerly navigable.

through

through would again be fertilized, and the Delta recover a third of its greatneſs.

Now that you have a general idea of Egypt, Sir, fix your attention on that rich country, and purſue the revolutions it has undergone. Beyond thoſe times, of which hiſtory has preſerved us any epoch, a people deſcended from the mountains near the cataracts, into the valley which is overflowed by the Nile *(f)*: it was then an impenetrable moraſs, covered with canes and reeds. After multiplied, and often fatal attempts, they at length diſcovered ſome ſalutary plants, amongſt which they particularly diſtinguiſhed the lotus *(g)*, which Herodotus

(f) Herodotus, p. 40. Euterpe; Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1. and Strabo, lib. 17. aſcertain the ſame fact.

(g) The lotus is an aquatic peculiar to Egypt, which grows in the rivulets, and on the ſides of the lakes; there are two ſpecies of it, the one with a white, the other with a blueiſh flower; the calix of the lotus blows like a large tulip, and diffuſes a ſweet ſmell, reſembling that of the lily; the firſt ſpecies produces a round root like that of a potatoe; the inhabitants of the banks of lake Menzall feed upon it. The rivulets in the environs of Damietta are covered with this

dotus calls the lily of the Nile, the reed we call the ſugar-cane, and which has preſerved in that country its primitive name of the *caſſab* reed *(b)*, the colocaſſus *(i)*, the onion, and

this majeſtic flower, which riſes upwards of two feet above the water. Mr. Paw aſſerts that it has diſappeared in Egypt, and gives a deſcription of that plant which bears no reſemblance to it, in his *Recherches ſur les Egyptiens & les Chinois, page* 150; but it is not wonderful that this learned author ſhould be miſtaken, ſince the greateſt part of the travellers who have viſited Egypt, have never ſeen the lotus, which is not to be found on the great canals of the Nile, but in the rivulets that paſs through the interior part of the country.

(b) Some authors have ſaid that the ſugar-cane was brought out of India into Egypt. Perhaps the manner of cultivating it only has been brought from thence. It appears to me to be a native of a country which produces ſeveral different ſpecies of reeds, and where it grows without any cultivation. Its very name induces this belief.

(i) The colocaſſus is a plant well known in botany. The inhabitants of Damietta pay particular attention to its cultivation; one ſees in the neighbourhood of that town immenſe fields covered with its large leaves; its root is of a conical form, and thicker than that of the lotus. It is not ſo inſipid as a potatoe.

the

the bean. Many years elapſed before they thought of cultivating theſe native plants. Neceſſity awakened their induſtry. He who by dint of hazard or reflection, made ſome uſeful diſcovery, became a king, or a God *(k)*. Oſiris taught men, who were at that time cannibals, to feed on the fruits of the earth, inſtead of human fleſh. Iſis, the ſame with Ceres, taught them to cultivate corn, and were elevated to the rank of deities. Hercules the Egyptian, the moſt ancient of the heroes who have borne that name, delivered Thebais from the monſters which ravaged that country, and had altars erected to him. Whilſt the people of Upper Egypt were contending for their vaſt moraſſes with ſavage beaſts *(l)*, the ſea, according to ancient accounts, bathed the feet of theſe mountains where the pyramids are built, and advanced on the ſide of the tower of the Arabs very far into Lybia. It covered a part of the Iſthmus of Suez;

(k) Diodorus Siculus, p. 24.

(l) Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, who gives the opinion of the Ethiopians on this ſubject.

and

and every part of what we now call the Delta, formed a great gulph. I paſs over ages, and come to that period when the Egyptians, under the domination of a religious worſhip, and of laws, formed canals to carry off the ſtagnant waters of the Nile, oppoſed ſtrong dykes to its ravages, and, tired of dwelling in the caverns of the rocks, built towns on ſpots elevated by art or nature. Already the river was kept within its bounds; the habitations of men were out of the reach of inundations *(m)*; experience had taught them to foreſee and to announce them. Geometry, meaſuring the lands newly riſen out of the river, or diminiſhed by its impetuoſity, ſecured the poſſeſſions of the inhabitants. A large city had ſprung up in the middle of Thebais, and ſeveral kings had made it their glory to embelliſh it. Such was the magnificence of its public monuments, that its remaining ruins at the end of upwards of four thouſand years leave us impreſſed with admiration and reſpect. Thebes flouriſhed for many ages,

(m) Herodotus, p. 40. Euterpe.

and

and Rome was not in exiſtence. Separated from the reſt of the world by deſerts, by mountains, and the ſea, the Egyptians peaceably cultivated the arts and ſciences; the conſtancy of their labours every day extended the limits of their empire, either by protecting with banks the new lands they had acquired, or by cutting deep drains to dry up the marſhy grounds *(n)*. One of the kings of Egypt, foreſeeing poſſibly what muſt happen, undertook to change the courſe of the river. After running one hundred and fifty leagues between the barriers I have mentioned, meeting with an

(n) The prieſts ſaid that Menes, the firſt king of Egypt, threw a bridge over the Nile, near Memphis. Before this prince's time, the river, overſpreading its banks at Mount Pſammius, ran to the ſouthward of that town, and diffuſed itſelf through the deſerts of Lybia. At a hundred furlongs from Memphis he formed a dyke to ſtop its courſe, and forced it to return between the mountains; by this means the original bed was left dry. Since the Perſians have become maſters of Egypt in our time, they keep in repair, at great expence, the dyke that ſhuts the ancient channel. Every year they add new works to it, and have placed troops to look after its preſervation. *Herodotus. Euterpe, p.* 55.

inſur-

inſurmountable obſtacle to the right, it turned precipitately to the left, and taking its courſe to the ſouthward of Memphis, it ſpread its waters through the ſands of Lybia. The prince had dug a new bed for it to the eaſt of Memphis, and by means of a large dyke, obliged it to return between the mountains, and diſcharge itſelf into the gulph that bathes the rock on which is built the caſtle of Cairo. The ancient bed of the river was ſtill to be ſeen in the time of Herodotus, and the dyke which barred its entrance. The Perſians preſerved it with the greateſt care. At the moment I am writing, this channel is not unknown; it may be traced acroſs the deſart, and paſſes to the weſtward of the lakes of Natrum. Petrified wood, maſts, lateen yards, the wreck of veſſels which have formerly navigated there, ſtill mark its ancient traces. The Arabs ſtill beſtow the name of *Bahr Bela ma (o)*, ſea without water, on this channel, which is almoſt choaked up.

(o) The Arabs call the great rivers *Bahr*, or ſea.

It is to the labours of the monarch who finiſhed this great work, that Egypt is indebted for the Delta. The enormous weight of the waters of the Nile, which throw themſelves into the bottom of the gulph, occaſions a reflux of the ſea. The ſands and mud that are carried along with them collected together in heaps, ſo that the iſle of the Delta, very inconſiderable at firſt, aroſe out of the ſea, of which it has repelled the limits. It was a gift of the river. Improvement has ſince come in aid to defend it againſt the attacks of the water, by raiſing dykes around it. In the time of Mœris, who lived five hundred years before the Trojan war, the Delta then appeared in its infancy *(p)*. Eight cubits was then ſufficient to overflow it in all its extent. Boats paſſed over it from one extremity to the other, and its towns, built on artificial elevations, reſembled the iſlands of the Ægean ſea *(q)*. When Herodotus viſited Egypt, fifteen cubits were neceſſary

(p) Herodotus, p. 41. Euterp.

(q) Strabo, lib. 17, p. 1136.

to cover all the Lower Egypt, but the Nile then overflowed the country for the ſpace of two days journey, to the right and left of the Delta. Under the Roman Empire, ſixteen cubits produced the ſame effect. In the time of the domination of the Arabs, their writers ſpeak of ſeventeen cubits as the moſt favourable height. Eighteen cubits at this day is the meaſure of abundance; but the inundation no longer extends over the Lower Egypt, but its progreſs is ſtopped at Grand Cairo, and in the neighbouring country. The Nile however ſometimes riſes to two-and-twenty cubits. The mud accumulated for ſo many years on the iſland, which aroſe from out of its boſom, is the cauſe of this phænomenon. Art has alſo contributed greatly towards it, either by the banks raiſed to protect the lands the moſt expoſed to the action of the river, or by multiplying its outlets, and by cutting a great number of canals, which give a free paſſage to the waters *(r)*. During my ſtay in Egypt, I have

(r) Strabo, lib. 17. ſays that the Bolbitine and Sebennitic branches have been formed by the hand of man.

twice

twice made the tour of the Delta, in the time of the inundation. I have even croſſed it by the canal of *Menouf*. The river flowed in full ſtreams in the great branches of Roſetta, and Damietta, and in thoſe which paſs through the interior part of the country; but it did not overflow the lands, except in the lower parts, where the dykes were pierced, for the purpoſe of watering the plantations of rice. Here then, in the ſpace of 3284 years, we ſee the Delta elevated fourteen cubits *(s)*. We muſt not imagine however, as ſeveral travellers pretend, that this iſland will continue to riſe, and that it will become unfruitful. As it owes its encreaſe to the annual ſettling of the mud, conveyed thither by the Nile, when it ceaſes to be overflowed, it will no longer increaſe

(s) To render this calculation minutely exact, we muſt know whether the Grecian, the Roman, and the Arabic cubit be the ſame meaſure, and even be acquainted with the variations it may have undergone amongſt theſe different people, &c. which would be extremely difficult to prove. This degree of preciſion not being eſſential to the ſubject I treat of, I ſhall content myſelf with quoting the teſtimonies of the authors, and the facts.

in height, for it is demonſtrated that culture is not ſufficient to raiſe land.

The Delta is at preſent in the moſt favourable ſituation for agriculture. Waſhed on the eaſt and weſt by two rivers formed by the diviſion of the Nile, and each of which is as large and more deep than the Loire, interſected by innumerable rivulets, it preſents to the eye an immenſe garden, all the different compartments of which may eaſily be watered. During the three months that the Thebais is under water, the Delta poſſeſſes fields covered with rice, barley, vegetables, and winter fruits. It is no longer, as in former times, the Ægean ſea with the Cyclades; rich harveſts now cover that plain whoſe extent is only bounded by the horiſon; it is now covered with groves of date-trees, of oranges, and ſycamores; here are perpetually running ſtreams, and a verdure that is conſtantly varied and renewed; it is, in ſhort, a picture of abundance, that delights the eye, and aſtoniſhes the imagination. By loſing the inundation, this iſle has gained every year the three months during which the Thebais is under water.

water. It is alſo the only part of Egypt where the ſame field produces two crops of grain within the year, one of rice, the other of barley.

You will naturally imagine, Sir, that it has increaſed in length as well as height. Amongſt ſeveral facts we derive from hiſtory, I ſhall ſelect only one *(t)*. Under the reign of Pſammeticus, the Mileſians, with thirty veſſels, landed at the mouth of the Bolbitine branch, now called that of Roſetta, where they fortified themſelves. They there built a town which they called *Meteïs*, the ſame as Faoüe, which, in the Coptic vocabularies, has preſerved the name of *Meſſil*. This town, formerly a ſea-port, is at preſent nine leagues diſtant from it; and this is the ſpace the Delta has lengthened, from the time of Pſammeticus to our day.

Homer, that ſublime painter of people, and of countries, Homer *(u)*, whoſe geographical details are the moſt precious monument of that kind, tranſmitted to us by

(t) Strabo, lib. 17.

(u) Odyſſey, book 4th.

antiquity, puts theſe words into the mouth of Menelaus, landed in Egypt. "In the "ſtormy ſea which waſhes Egypt, there is "an iſland called Pharos. Its diſtance "from the ſhore is ſuch, as that a veſſel "with a fair wind, may make the paſſage "in a day." *(x)* Proteus, inſtructing Menelaus, ſays to him; "Deſtiny forbids thee "to ſee again thy friends, thy palace, and "thy native land, until thou returneſt to "the banks of the river Egyptus, *(y)* "which derives its ſource from Jupiter, "and until thou haſt offered up hecatombs "to the immortal gods . . . . He ſaid, "and this order, which obliged me to tra-"verſe a ſecond time the vaſt and ſtormy "ſea that ſeparates the Pharos from the "Egyptian continent, rent my heart with "grief."

Homer, who had travelled *(z)* in Egypt,

(x) Odyſſey, book 4th.

(y) The Nile was called Egyptus until the time of Nileus, one of the ſucceſſors of Mendes, who, making great works to contain it, and prevent its ravages, gave it his name. *Diod. Sic. lib. i.*

(z) Diodorus Siculus.

where

where he had learnt from the prieſts that mythology which he makes ſuch brilliant uſe of in his poems, repreſents to us the iſland of Pharos, which forms the preſent port of Alexandria, as at the diſtance of at leaſt twenty leagues from the coaſt of Egypt, and in this ſentiment concurs with that of the moſt remote antiquity.

What prodigious changes great rivers occaſion on the ſurface of the globe! how inceſſantly they repel the ſea, by accumulating ſand on ſand! how they elevate at their mouths iſlands which become at length large portions of the continent. It is thus that the Nile has formed almoſt all the Lower Egypt, and created out of the waters the Delta, which is ninety leagues in circumference. It is thus that the Meander, conſtantly repelling the waves of the Mediterranean, and gradually filling up the gulph into which it falls, has placed in the middle of the land, the town of Miletis, formerly a celebrated harbour. It is thus that the Tigris and the Euphrates, let looſe from the Armenian hills, and ſweeping with them in their courſe the ſands of Meſopo-

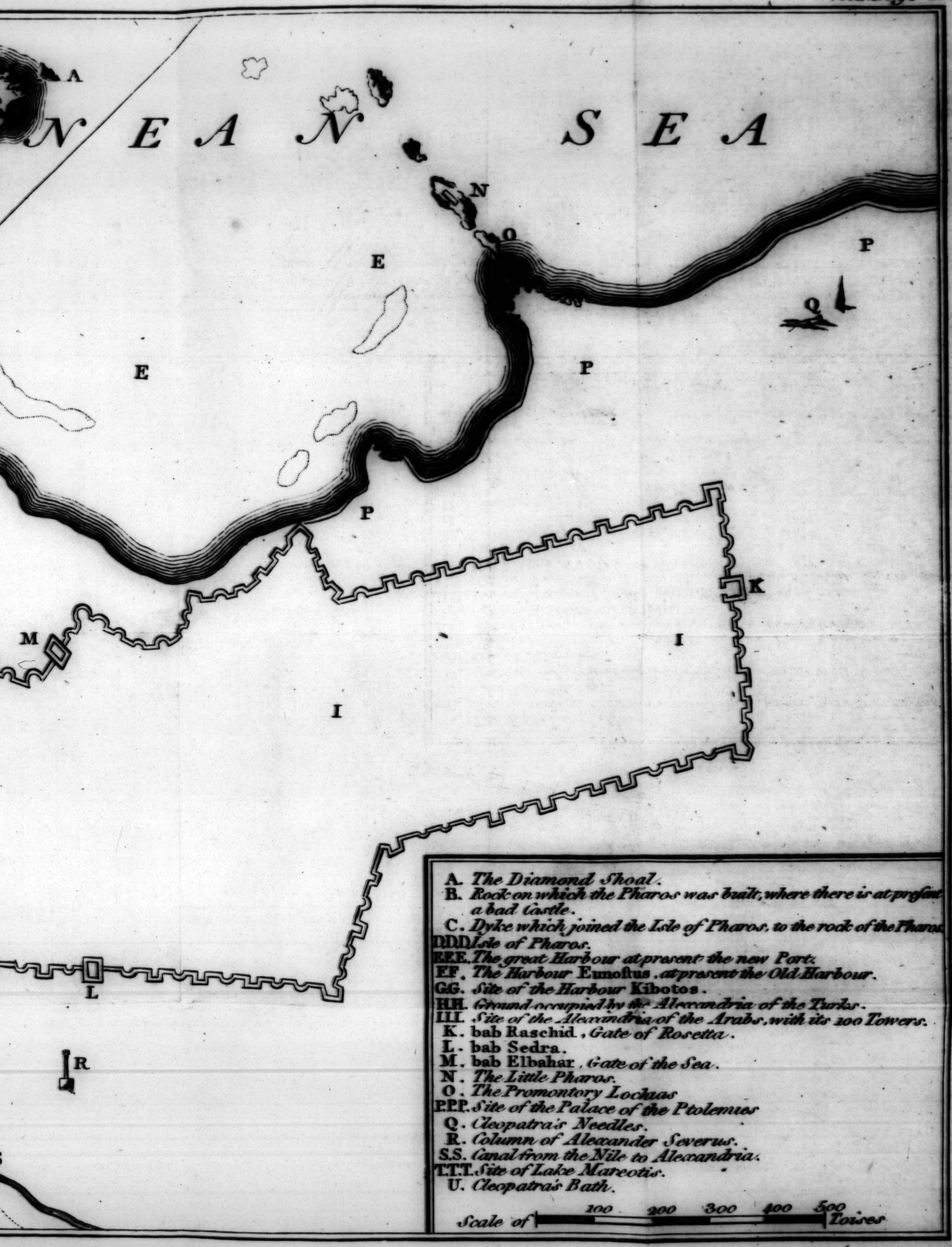
tamia, are imperceptibly filling up the Perſian gulph.

You have now before you a general picture of Egypt, and of the principal phyſical revolutions that have happened in that country: I ſhall next enter into particular details, which you will probably find more intereſting. It is from the center of Alexandria, ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the ſight of her monuments, which the ravages of time, and of her conquerors, have not been able to deſtroy; weeping over the ruins of her columns, the obeliſks that decorate her public places, and her temples, that I ſhall ſpeak to you of the City of Alexander, of the Alexandria of the Arabs, and of the rubbiſh on which the Turks preſume to beſtow that pompous title. Barbarians! who have ſtifled in their vaſt empire, the arts, the ſciences, the cities, the kingdoms. Nothing now remains but the name of ſo many noble works, which their ignorance has ſuffered to periſh, or which their fanaticiſm has deſtroyed. I have the honour to be, &c.

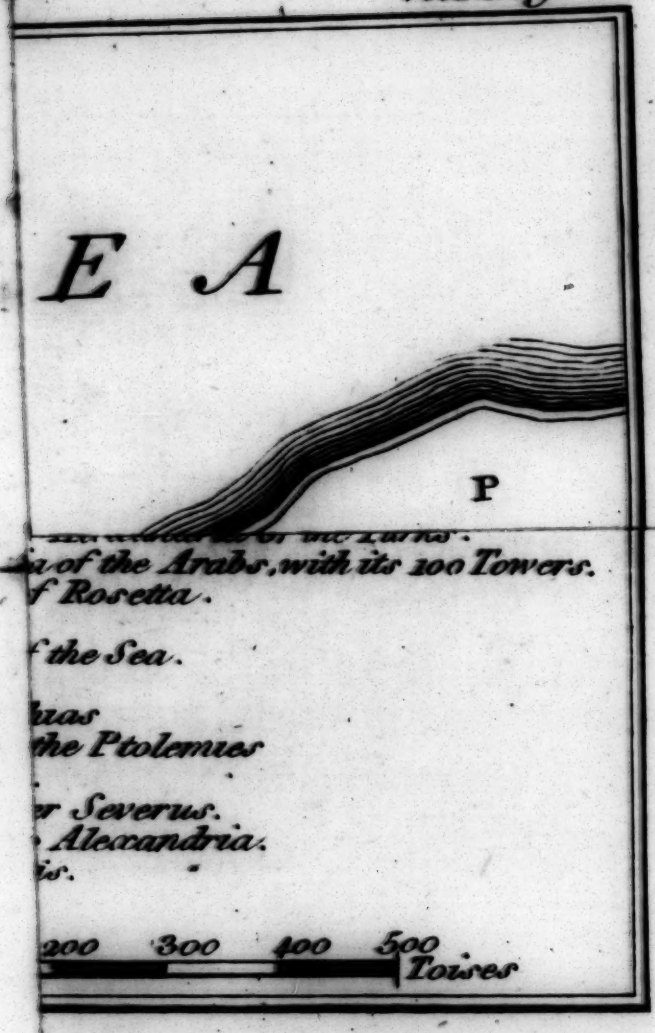
LETTER

Pl. I.




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R
A. The Diamond Shoal.
B. Rock on which the Pharos was built, where there is at present a bad Castle.
C. Dyke which joined the Isle of Pharos, to the rock of the Pharos.
D.D.D. Isle of Pharos.
E.E.E. The great Harbour at present the new Port.
F.F. The Harbour Eunostus, at present the Old Harbour.
G.G. Site of the Harbour Kibotos.
H.H. Ground occupied by the Alexandria of the Turks.
I.I.I. Site of the Alexandria of the Arabs, with its 100 Towers.
K. bab Raschid, Gate of Rosetta.
L. bab Sedra.
M. bab Elbahar, Gate of the Sea.
N. The Little Pharos.
O. The Promontory Lochias
P.P.P. Site of the Palace of the Ptolemies
Q. Cleopatra's Needles.
R. Column of Alexander Severus.
S.S. Canal from the Nile to Alexandria.
T.T.T. Site of Lake Mareotis.
U. Cleopatra's Bath.
Scale of 100 200 300 400 500 Toises

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E A
P
a of the Arabs, with its 100 Towers.
f Rosetta.
f the Sea.
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LETTER II.

A deſcription of Alexandria, ancient and modern, and of its antiquities, and three ports; with an account of the various revolutions it has experienced in falling ſucceſſively under the dominion of the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, and the Ottomans. The deſcription is accompanied with a topographical chart of the city and its environs, delineating both its former and preſent ſtate.

To Mr. L. M.

Alexandria.

ALEXANDRIA, Sir, merits your attention. The rank it held amongſt the moſt celebrated cities *(a)*, the learned men it produced, the monuments which ſtill teſtify

(a) Diodorus Siculus, who wrote at Rome under Auguſtus, ſays, that Alexandria was the firſt city in the world, lib. 17.

ſts paſt glory at the end of two thouſand years, have a claim on your curioſity. It was to ſatisfy that curioſity that, for the laſt three months, I have viſited the places where it has ſtood; it is from reading the Greek, Latin, and Arabian authors, that I learn where to look for it, in the midſt of thoſe ruins under which it now lies buried; it is by comparing their writings with the objects before my eyes, that I am enabled to trace out its plan to you. Acknowledge that it is painful to ſearch for a celebrated city, within its own walls.

Aſia Minor being already ſubdued, and the pride of Tyre humbled, Alexander marched towards Egypt, groaning under the Perſian yoke. He became maſter of it without a battle, becauſe the people, happy to break their chains, welcomed him as a deliverer, and received him with open arms. To preſerve this conqueſt, ſo diſtant from his own dominions, it was neceſſary to have a fortreſs, with a port capable of receiving numerous fleets. Egypt had no ſuch ineſtimable advantage; Alexander

ander created it. A compact country between Lake Mareotis, and the beautiful harbour formed by the iſle of Pharos *(b)*, appeared to him adapted to his purpoſe. He there traced out the walls of a great city, on which he beſtowed his name, and went himſelf to viſit the wonders of Upper Egypt, whilſt his engineer Dinochares laboured to carry his plan into execution. This journey laſted upwards of a year. On

(b) Homer, as I have quoted him, repreſents the iſle of Pharos to us as at the diſtance of a day's navigation from the coaſt of Egypt, becauſe Lake Mareotis then joined the ſea, and formed a Gulph there. In the ſpace of five hundred years from the time of the poet to the foundation of Alexandria, canals were cut in Lower Egypt; Lake Mareotis, which was the receptacle of the waters of Thebais, retreated a little, and the tongue of land on which Alexander built this city, appeared. When Cæſar, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus wrote, it waſhed the walls. In the time of the Arabs, it was already half a league from it. Under the deſtructive empire of the Ottomans, it has totally diſappeared. A traveller who ſhould ſee this part of Egypt in our days, and had only read Homer, would be apt to ſay with Madame Dacier, Pope, and other learned perſons, that his deſcription of Pharos is a mere ſport of the imagination.

his return, Alexandria was almoſt finiſhed *(c)*. He peopled it with the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, and purſued the courſe of his exploits.

Alexandria was a league and a half long, by one third in breadth, which made the circumference of its walls about four leagues *(d)*. Lake Mareotis bathed its walls on the ſouth, and the Mediterranean on the north. It was interſected lengthwiſe by ſtraight parallel ſtreets. This direction left a free paſſage to the northerly wind, which alone conveys coolneſs and ſalubrity into Egypt. A ſtreet of two thouſand feet wide began at the gate of the ſea, and terminated at the gate of Canopus. It was decorated by magnificent houſes, by temples, and by public the buildings. In this extenſive range, eye was never tired with admiring the marble, the porphyry, and the obeliſks,

(c) Quintus Curtius, vit. Alex. lib. 4. chap. 8.

(d) Quintus Curtius makes them 80 furlongs, or 3 leagues and a half. Pliny, 15000 Romains, or 5 leagues. Strabo 76 furlongs, or 3 leagues and an eighth. Diodorus Siculus, 96 furlongs, or 4 leagues.

which

which were deſtined at ſome future day to embelliſh Rome *(e)* and Conſtantinople. This ſtreet, the handſomeſt in the univerſe, was interſected by another of the ſame breadth *(f)*, which formed a ſquare at their junction of half a league in circumference. From the middle of this great place, the two gates were to be ſeen at once, and veſſels arriving under full ſail, from the north and from the ſouth.

A mole of a mile in length *(g)* ſtretched from the continent to the iſle of Pharos, and divided the great harbour into two. That which is to the northward preſerved his name. A dyke drawn from the iſland to the rock whereon was built the Pharos, ſecured it from the weſterly winds. The other was called *Eunoſtos*, or the Safe Return. The former is called at preſent the new, the latter the old harbour: a bridge

(e) Every body knows that the obeliſks at Rome have been brought from Alexandria.

(f) Diodorus Siculus. Strabo, lib. 17.

(g) This mole was called *Hepta Stadium*, becauſe it was 7 furlongs, or a mile long.

that

that joins the mole to the city, ſerved for a communication between them. It was raiſed on lofty pillars ſunk into the ſea, and left a free paſſage for ſhips. The palace, which advanced beyond the promontory of *Lochias*, extended as far as the dyke, and occupied more than a quarter of the city *(b)*. Each of the Ptolemies added to its magnificence. It contained within its encloſure, the muſeum, an aſylum for learned men, groves, and buildings worthy of royal majeſty, and a temple where the body of Alexander was depoſited in a golden coffin *(i)*. The infamous Seleucus Cibyoſactes violated this monument, carried off the golden coffin, and put a glaſs one in its place. In the great harbour was the little iſland of Anti-Rhodes, where ſtood a theatre, and a royal place of reſidence. Within the harbour of Eunoſtos, was a ſmaller

(b) Strabo, lib. 17. ſays it occupied one-third of it.

(i) Perdiccas undertook to convey the body of Alexander to the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, agreeable to the will of that prince. Ptolemy, ſon of Lagus, carried it off, and placed it in the palace of Alexandria.

one,

one, called Kibotos *(k)*, dug by the hand of man, which communicated with Lake Mareotis by a canal. Between this canal and the palace was the admirable temple of Serapis *(l)*, and that of Neptune near the great place where the market was held. Alexandria extended likewiſe along the ſouthern banks of the lake. Its eaſtern part preſented to view the gymnaſium, with its porticoes of more than ſix hundred feet long, ſupported by ſeveral rows of marble pillars. Without the gate of Canopus was a ſpacious circus, for the chariot races. Beyond that, the ſuburb of Nicopolis ran along the ſea ſhore, and ſeemed a ſecond Alexandria. A ſuperb amphitheatre was built there with a race-ground, for the celebration of the quinquennalia *(m)*.

Such is the deſcription left us of Alexandria by the ancients, and above all by Strabo. This city, whoſe foundation is 333 years prior to our æra, was ſucceſſively held in ſubjection by the Ptolemies, the

(k) *Kibotos*, the harbour of the Arch.

(l) Strabo, lib. 17.

(m) Feaſts celebrated every five years.

Romans,

Romans, and the Greek emperors *(n)*. Towards the middle of the ſixth century, Amrou *Ebn el Aas*, Omar's general, took it by ſtorm, after a ſiege of fourteen months, and with the loſs of twenty-three thouſand men. Heraclius, then emperor of Conſtantinople, did not ſend a ſingle ſhip to its aſſiſtance. This prince affords an example very rare in hiſtory; he had diſplayed ſome vigour in the firſt year of his reign, and then ſuffered himſelf to be lulled into idleneſs and effeminacy. Awakened ſuddenly from his lethargy by the noiſe of the conqueſts of Coſroes, that ſcourge of the eaſt, he put himſelf at the head of his armies, diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a great captain from his very firſt campaign, laid waſte Perſia for ſeven years, and returned to his capital covered with laurels: he then became a theologian on the throne, loſt all his energy, and amuſed himſelf the reſt of his life with diſputing upon Monotheiſm,

(n) The tenth year of the *Hegyra*, the year 651 of our era, according to Abulfeda, 994 years after its foundation. The word era, as I have obſerved in the *Life of Mahomet*, comes from *Arkha*, which in Arabic ſignifies *an Epoch*.

whilſt

whilſt the Arabs were robbing him of the fineſt provinces of his empire. Deaf to the cries of the unfortunate inhabitants of Alexandria *(o)*, as he had been to thoſe of the people of Jeruſalem, who defended themſelves for two years, he left them a ſacrifice to the fortunate aſcendant of the indefatigable Amrou. All their intrepid youth periſhed with their arms in their hands.

The victor, aſtoniſhed at his conqueſt, wrote to the Caliph *(p)* "I have taken "the city of the weſt. It is of an immenſe "extent. I cannot deſcribe to you how "many wonders it contains. There are "4000 baths, 12000 dealers in freſh oil, "4000 Jews, who pay tribute, 400 co-"medians, &c."

(o) Omar led all the forces of Arabia againſt Jeruſalem. The inhabitants defended themſelves with admirable conſtancy. They ſent ſeveral times to conjure Heraclius to furniſh them with ſome aſſiſtance. Their prayers were of no avail, and they ſaw themſelves compelled to ſurrender after a ſiege of two years, without having been able to obtain a ſingle ſoldier from an Emperor, who ſacrificed his time and his treaſures to procure the triumph of a new ſect.

(p) Elmacin, life of Omar, p. 30.

The

The library, wherein more than 400,000 manuſcripts had been collected by the zeal of the Ptolemies, excited the attention of the conqueror. He demanded the Caliph's orders. "Burn theſe books, replied the furious Omar: if they contain only what "is in the Coran they are uſeleſs, and dangerous if they contain any thing elſe." A barbarous ſentence, which reduced to aſhes a great part of the labours of learned antiquity. What a quantity of knowledge, how many arts, what a number of capital works have diſappeared from the earth by this fatal conflagration! It is perhaps from this melancholy epocha that we muſt date that ignorance which has covered with a veil thoſe countries, formerly the cradle of the ſciences. If three-fourths of the works that Europe is poſſeſſed of, were annihilated in an inſtant; if the art of printing did not exiſt, and an unlettered people were to take poſſeſſion of that beautiful part of the globe, it would return to that barbariſm from whence it has ſcarcely been reſcued by the labour of ſo many ages. Such has been the hard fortune of the eaſtern world.

Alexandria

Alexandria under the domination of the Arabs gradually loſt its ſplendor. The diſtance of the caliphs of Bagdad did not allow them to give any effectual encouragement to the arts and commerce. Population diminiſhed every day. In the year *(q)* 875 of our æra, the old walls were pulled down, its encloſure contracted to the half of its ancient ſize, and thoſe walls were built which exiſt at the preſent day. Their ſolidity, their thickneſs, the hundred towers with which they were flanked, have preſerved them againſt the efforts of man, and the ravages of time. This ſecond Alexandria, which may be called that of the Arabs, was ſtill a flouriſhing city in the thirteenth century *(r)*. The diſpoſition of its ſtreets preſented the form of a chequer. It had preſerved a part of its public places, and of its monuments. Its

(q) This event happened under the empire of *Elmetouak kel*, the tenth Caliph Abaſſid, and the one-and-thirtieth from Mahomet. *Elmain Ebn Toulon*, then governor of Egypt, and who had the project of becoming independent, built them.

(r) Abulfeda, Geograph. Deſcrip. of Egypt.

commerce extended itſelf from Spain to India; its canals were ſtill ſupported; its merchandize mounted into Upper Egypt by Lake Mareotis, and was conveyed into the Delta by the Canal of Faoué *(ſ)*. The Pharos, built by *Soſtrates* of *Cnidos*, ſtill exiſted. This miraculous tower, as it is called by Cæſar, had ſeveral ſtories, and was ſurrounded by galleries ſupported on pillars of marble. Its elevation was near four hundred feet *(t)*. On its ſummit was placed a large mirror of poliſhed ſteel, ſo diſpoſed as to enable the beholder to perceive the image of diſtant veſſels before they became viſible to the eye. This admirable edifice ſerved them as a ſignal. Fires were lighted on it during the night, to warn the mariner that he was near the coaſt of Egypt, which is ſo low, that there is great danger of running aſhore before it can

(ſ) It was built under Ptolemy Philadelphus.

(t) Abulfeda in his deſcription of Egypt ſpeaks of this mirror, which ſeveral Arabian authors alſo mention. He ſays that it was deſtroyed by the artifices of the Chriſtians, under the reign of *Oualid*, ſon of *Abd el Melec*.

be

be diſtinguiſhed. Alexandria in its decline ſtill preſerved an air of grandeur and magnificence that excited admiration.

In the fifteenth century the Turks became maſters of Egypt *(u)*, and this was the term of its glory. Aſtronomy, geometry, poetry, and grammar were yet cultivated there. The rod of the Pachas expelled theſe remains of the fine arts. The prohibition of exporting the corn of the Thebais, gave the mortal ſtab to agriculture. The canals filled up; commerce languiſhed; the Alexandria of the Arabs was ſo depopulated, that not a ſingle inhabitant was to be found in all its vaſt encloſure. They had abandoned large buildings that fell into ruins, which nobody dared to repair under a government where it is a crime to appear rich, and built wretched habitations on the ſea-coaſt. Already was the Pharos deſtroyed, one of the ſeven wonders of the

(u) In 1517, Sultan Selim made the conqueſt of Egypt, and the firſt care of this barbarous conqueror was to hang under the gate *Bab Zouilé*, Thomambie, the laſt king of the Mameluks, whoſe government had ſubſiſted for near 300 years.

world, in the room of which they built a ſquare caſtle, without taſte or ornament, and unable to withſtand the fire of a ſingle veſſel of the line. At preſent, in the ſpace of two leagues, encloſed by walls, one ſees nothing but marble columns, ſome of them overturned in the duſt, and ſawed into ſtumps, (for the Turks make millſtones of them) and others erect, and ſtill firm upon their baſes, from the enormity of their weight. Nothing is to be ſeen but the remains of pilaſters, of capitals, of obeliſks, and whole mountains of ruins heaped one upon another. The ſight of theſe ruins, the memory of thoſe famous monuments they repreſent, excite regret in the mind, and draw tears from the eyes of the beholder.

The modern Alexandria is a ſmall town of little extent, ſcarcely containing 6000 inhabitants *(x)*, but very commercial, an advantage it owes entirely to its ſituation. It is built on the ſpot which was former-

(x) The ancient Alexandria contained 300,000 free perſons under Auguſtus. Add to this at leaſt double the number of ſlaves, you will have 900,000 ſouls. What a prodigious difference!

ly

ly the old harbour, left uncovered by the retreating of the ſea. The mole which joined the continent to the iſle of Pharos, is enlarged, and is now become a part of the main land. The iſland of Anti-Rhodes is in the middle of the preſent town. It is diſcoverable by an eminence covered with ruins. The harbour *Kibotos* is choked up. The canal which conveyed the waters of Lake Mareotis has diſappeared. This lake itſelf, whoſe banks were covered with papyrus and date-trees, is no longer in exiſtence, becauſe the Turks have neglected to preſerve the canals which conveyed the waters of the Nile *(y)*. *Belon*, an accurate obſerver, who travelled in Egypt ſome years after the conqueſt of the Ottomans, aſſures us, that in his time Lake Mareotis was only at half a league's diſtance from the walls of Alexandria, and that it was ſurrounded by foreſts of palm trees. At the moment I am writing, it is entirely

(y) Belon, deſcription of Alexandria. He travelled in Egypt fifteen years after the conqueſt of Selim, now 250 years ago.

occupied by the ſands of Lybia. Theſe deplorable changes muſt be attributed to the deſtructive government of the Turks.

The canal of Faoüé, the only one which at preſent communicates with Alexandria, and without which that town could not ſubſiſt, ſince it has not a drop of freſh water, is half filled with mud and ſand. Under the Roman empire, under the domination even of the Arabs, it was navigable all the year, and ſerved for the conveyance of merchandize. It diffuſed its fecundity in the plains through which it paſſed. Its banks were ſhaded with date-trees, covered with vineyards, and adorned with country houſes *(z)*. In our days, there is no

(z) The following paſſage of Abulfeda will confirm what I have advanced: "Nothing can be ſeen "more beautiful than the canal of Alexandria. The "two banks lined with gardens, and ſhady groves, "are covered with perpetual verdure, which *Dafard* "*el Hadad* has expreſſed in theſe beautiful verſes.

"What amity reigns on the banks of the canal of "Alexandria. The proſpect they offer diffuſes joy "over the ſoul. The groves with which they are "ſhaded, preſent to the navigator a canopy of ver-"dure. The hand of Aquilon (the north wind), "ſpreads

no water in it till towards the end of Auguſt, and it hardly remains long enough to fill the ciſterns of the town. The fields through which it ſpreads abundance, are deſerted. The groves, the gardens that ſurrounded Alexandria have diſappeared with the water to which they owed their fertility. Without the walls, one perceives only a few ſcattered trees, ſome ſycamores, and fig-trees whoſe fruit is delicious, ſome date and caper-trees, and kali, that hide the burning ſands which would otherwiſe be inſupportable to the ſight.

" ſpreads freſhneſs over them, whilſt it furrows up the
" waters, and plays with its ſurface. The ſuperb
" date-tree, whoſe pliant head languidly reclines, like
" that of a handſome woman overcome with ſleep,
" is crowned with pendent cluſters.

Oua khalig Eleſcanderié ellati iatiba men el Nil men ahſan el mentezhat laenno daïak Makdar el janebin, bel Beſatin oua ſih iecoul Dafar el Hadad:

Ou achié achadet l'aïnak menzara
Ja eſſerour bo le calback ou afda
Roud le mekadder cladar oua gedaoual
Nacachet aleih id ech chemal mebareda
Oua-l-Nakhl Kelrhid el haſſan tezaïnet
Oua lebes men atmarben calaïda.

Abulfeda, Deſcription of Egypt.

Still however, every ſign of the ancient magnificence of Alexandria is not effaced. The reſervoirs vaulted with much art, and which extend under the whole town, are almoſt entire at the end of two thouſand years. Towards the eaſtern part of the palace *(a)*, are two obeliſks, vulgarly called Cleopatra's needles. They are of Thebaic ſtone, and covered with hieroglyphics: one is overturned, broken, and lying under the ſand; the other is on its pedeſtal. Theſe two obeliſks, each of them of a ſingle ſtone, are about ſixty-feet high, by ſeven foot ſquare at the baſe. Towards the gate of Roſetta, are five columns of marble on the place formerly occupied by the porticoes of the Gymnaſium. The reſt of the colonnade, the deſign of which was diſcoverable a hundred years ago *(b)*, has ſince been deſtroyed by the barbariſm of the Turks.

(a) Mr. Pocock thinks they were placed before the temple of Neptune, but this temple was near port Eunoſtus, and theſe obeliſks are half a league from it, near the promontory of Lochias, the ſpot aſſigned by Strabo for the palace.

(b) Maillet, Deſcription of Egypt.

What

What moſt engages the attention of travellers, is the pillar of red granite, ſituated at a quarter of a league from the ſouthern gate. The capital is corinthian, with palm leaves, and not indented. It is nine feet high. The ſhaft and the upper member of the baſe are of one piece of ninety feet long, and nine in diameter. The baſe is a ſquare of about fifteen feet on each ſide. This block of marble, ſixty feet in circumference, reſts on two layers of ſtone bound together with lead, which however has not prevented the Arabs from forcing out ſeveral of them, to ſearch for an imaginary treaſure. The whole column is one hundred and fourteen feet high. It is perfectly well poliſhed, and only a little ſhivered on the eaſtern ſide. Nothing can equal the majeſty of this monument; ſeen from a diſtance, it overtops the town, and ſerves as a ſignal for veſſels. Approaching it nearer, it produces an aſtoniſhment mixed with awe. One can never be tired with admiring the beauty of the capital, the length of the ſhaft, nor the extraordinary ſimplicity of the pedeſtal. I am perſuaded,

ſuaded, that if this column were tranſported before the palace of our kings, all Europe would come to pay its tribute of admiration to the moſt beautiful monument on the face of the globe.

Learned men and travellers have made many fruitleſs attempts to diſcover in honour of what prince it was erected. The beſt informed have concluded that it could not be in honour of Pompey, ſince neither Strabo nor Diodorus Siculus have ſpoken of it. They have remained in doubt; it appears to me that Abulfeda could have extricated them from it; he calls it *the pillar of Severus (c)*. And hiſtory informs us that this emperor viſited Egypt *(d)*, gave

(c) "Oua eſcanderié ala chat bahr elroum, oua beha elmenarat el machhoura, oua beha *Aamoud Severi*.

"Alexandria is built on the ſea coaſt; it poſſeſſes "a famous Pharos, and the *column of Severus*." *Abulfeda*, Deſcription of Egypt.

(d) The Emperor Severus viſited the city of Alexandria. He granted a ſenate to its inhabitants, who until that time, under the ſubjection of a ſingle Roman magiſtrate, had lived without any national council, as under the reign of the Ptolemies, when the will of the prince was their only law. Severus did not confine his

gave a ſenate to Alexandria, and deſerved well of its inhabitants. This column was a mark of their gratitude. The Greek inſcription, half effaced, which is viſible on the weſt ſide when the ſun ſhines upon it, was legible, no doubt, in the time of Abulfeda, and preſerved the name of Severus. Nor is this the only monument erected to him by the gratitude of the Alexandrians. One ſtill ſees in the midſt of the ruins of Antinoe, built by Adrian, a magnificent pillar, the inſcription on which is ſtill remaining, dedicated to Alexander Seveurs.

At half a league's diſtance to the ſouthward of the town, is the deſcent into the catacombs, the ancient aſylum of the dead. Winding paſſages lead to the ſubterraneous grottoes, where they were depoſited. The ſuburb of Necropolis *(e)*, extended ſo far. In going along the ſea-coaſt, there is a large baſon cut out of the rock, that lines the ſhore; on the ſides of this baſon, two

his benefactions there; he changed ſeveral laws in their favour. *Spartian, chap.* 17. *Life of the Emperor Severus.*

(e) The city of the dead, wherein there were gardens, temples, and ſuperb mauſoleums.

beautiful

beautiful ſaloons are hewn out by the chiſel, with benches that run acroſs them. A canal made zig-zag, for the purpoſe of ſtopping the ſand by its different windings, conveys into them the water of the ſea, as pure and tranſparent as cryſtal. I have bathed in this place. Seated on the ſtone bench, the water riſes a little above the waiſt; the feet ſoftly repoſe on a fine ſand. The waves of the ſea are heard roaring againſt the rock, and foaming in the canal. The ſwell enters, raiſes you up, and leaves you; and thus alternately entering and retiring, brings a continual freſh ſupply of water, and a coolneſs which is truly delicious, under a burning ſky. This place is vulgarly called the bath of Cleopatra. Some ruins announce that it was formerly ornamented.

I cannot quit this city, Sir, without reminding you of ſome of thoſe memorable events of which it was the theatre. Near this eminence, Cæſar, in deſtroying the arſenal of the Alexandrians, burnt a part of the Ptolemean library. At the end of that harbour, repulſed by his enemies, he threw himſelf

himſelf in full armour into the waves, and always maſter of himſelf, foreſeeing that the crowd of fugitives muſt ſink his ſhip, he ſwam to another, at a greater diſtance. This preſence of mind ſaved him, for his veſſel was ſwallowed up with every perſon who had taken refuge in it. There, Cleopatra, celebrated for her beauty, her talents, and her art, entangled him in her net, chained his unconquerable activity, and lulling him to reſt in the boſom of voluptuouſneſs, led him in her ſuite in a voyage on the Nile, when he ſhould have ſet ſail for Rome, whoſe gates might have been for ever ſhut againſt him in conſequence of this complaiſance. Near to thoſe columns, ſad remains of the gymnaſium, the haughty queen of Egypt, ſeated on her golden throne, received in the preſence of the univerſe, the title of ſpouſe to Antony, who ſacrificed to her all his glory. Having loſt the opportunities of victory by a blind devotion to pleaſure, ſhe deſtroyed herſelf by the bite of a viper, and he fell upon his ſword, holding out by their death a great example to poſterity.

The

The Muſeum, the rubbiſh of which points out the ſpot where it ſtood, was the aſylum of the ſciences. Appian, Herodian, Euclid, Origen, Philo, and a crowd of other learned men, cultivated them at Alexandria. At preſent ignorance and barbariſm have ſmothered the fine arts; a great revolution is neceſſary to reſtore them to life.

This letter, Sir, is very long: I will not add any obſervations on the manners, and commerce of the Alexandrians. Such details will come in their turn. I am impatient to quit a place where one lives in the midſt of ruins; where every object inſpires melancholy; where the inhabitants are a mixture of Moors and Turks, whoſe crimes have driven them from their country; where the Bedouin Arabs come to rob you in broad day; where nature, in ſhort, dead for eleven months in the year, is decked with verdure for an inſtant, only to leave you a long regret.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER III.

The route from Alexandria to Roſetta, acroſs the Deſart, with a deſcription of Aboukir, *anciently Canopus; of the famous Temple of Serapis; of the feſtivals which were celebrated at this place; of the dangers which occur in travelling over the ſands; and of the beautiful environs of Roſetta.*

To Mr. L. M.

Roſetta.

TRAVELLERS, Sir, who go from Alexandria to Roſetta by land, leave the canal of Faoüé to the right, paſs near the ruins of the great circus, and fall in on their left with the remains of Nicopolis. This ſuburb was embelliſhed by Auguſtus after his victory over Antony. For two leagues there are nothing but heaps of rubbiſh, which cover the precious relics of antiquity. One then coaſts along the beach of the ſea. The view on one

ſide

ſide extends over the waters, and on the other over a ſandy country. Some date-trees ſcattered here and there, interrupt the melancholy uniformity of theſe parched plains. The Bedouin Arabs feed their flocks there in the winter; in the ſummer they collect the ſoda *(f)* in heaps, which they burn, and ſell the aſhes to the Alexandrians, who carry it into Syria, and the iſle of Crete, where it is uſed in making ſoap. Theſe wandering tribes, on the firſt rumour of a revolution in Egypt, mount their horſes, infeſt the high-roads, and ſtrip the travellers. At ſix leagues from Alexandria, one falls in with *the Madié (g)*, where there is a ferry. It is the extremity of the Canopic branch. It begins at Faoüé, croſſes the lake of *Behiré*, which is ſeven leagues round, and falls into the ſea near to *Aboukir (h)*. This ſmall town is the

(f) The Soda, or *Kali*, is a creeper that grows in the ſand, and produces a pure *alkali*.

(g) *Madié* in Arabic ſignifies the paſſage of a lake or river.

(h) This place is known amongſt mariners, by the name of *Bekier*.

ancient

ancient Canopus; its diſtance of ſix leagues from the Pharos, its ſituation on the banks of the ſea, agree perfectly with the deſcription the ancients give us of Canopus. Pliny, who had collected the teſtimonies of antiquity, ſays, that it was formerly an iſland. Its local appearance makes this credible. The grounds around it are ſo low, that the ſea ſtill covered a part of them in the time of Strabo *(i)*. The town, built upon a rock, which forms a handſome road for ſhipping, was out of the reach of inundations.

(k) Canopus received its name from the pilot of Menelaus, who died there; his tomb was ſtill to be ſeen in the age in which St. Epiphanes wrote. The advantages of its ſituation, its temple of Serapis, the induſtry of its prieſts, rendered it one of the moſt famous pilgrimages of Egypt. The people flocked thither in crowds, from the

(i) Strabo, lib. 17.

(k) Strabo, lib. 17. Diodorus Siculus. St. Epiphanes, lib. 4. chap. 3. Theſe teſtimonies confirm the opinion of Homer, who makes Menelaus land in Egypt. Odyſſey, lib. 4.

moſt diſtant provinces, and, above all, from Alexandria. Licentiouſneſs preſided at theſe feaſts; the worſhippers of the God were brought thither, more by pleaſure than religion. The prieſts were no leſs conſulted as phyſicians, than as interpreters of the oracle. Expert in reſtoring the relaxed organs of their patients, by perfumed baths, in repairing the worn out ſtate of their ſtomachs, by a lenient diet, full of juice, and mixed with aromatics, in exciting their imagination by voluptuous deſcriptions, they ſucceeded in reſtoring ſenſations to thoſe who had loſt them. Theſe cures, the honour of which they attributed to Serapis, were inſerted in a regiſter, which dazzled the eyes of the people, and ſupported their celebrity. Never had any divinity more worſhippers; never did prieſts receive larger offerings *(l)*.

Strabo

(l) Canopus has a temple conſecrated to Serapis, where there is a peculiar worſhip for that God. The perſons of the greateſt honour put faith in it. . . . . The prieſts are occupied in writing the marvellous cures performed there. But what is moſt aſtoniſhing,

is

Strabo aſſures us, that the canal which goes from Alexandria to Canopus, was filled night and day with boats full of pilgrims, whoſe ſongs and dances preſented a picture of the moſt extravagant joy, and of the moſt unbounded licentiouſneſs. At this day the canal is dry a part of the year, and the town in ruins, offers nothing to the eye but wretched habitations, and a caſtle with ſome pieces of cannon to defend the road.

After paſſing the ferry of *Madié*, the traveller finds a caravanſary, the only aſylum againſt the extreme heats of a burning ſky, in a journey of fourteen leagues.

is the prodigious concourſe of people, who collect there from all parts, at the feaſts of Serapis, and who deſcend the canal of Alexandria. Night and day it is covered with boats, filled with men and women, who ſing and dance with an extreme licentiouſneſs. Strabo, lib. 17.

Theſe pilgrimages, in uſe in the time of Herodotus, ſtill exiſt in our days. The Pagans went to the temple of Serapis. The Turks go to the tomb of their ſantons. The Coptis to the churches of their ſaints. The one and the other give themſelves up to joy: and even the Turkiſh gravity has not been able to aboliſh ſongs and dances full of licentiouſneſs, which ſeem to have taken riſe with the Egyptians.

Beyond that is a barren plain, where the eye perceives neither tree, nor ſhrub, nor verdure. The ſight is fatigued by a torrent of light; the ſkin is burnt by the ardour of the ſun. Eleven columns, placed at different diſtances, ſerve as a direction for the traveller acroſs the deſart, wherein the wind drives before it the hillocks of ſand, like the waves of the ocean. Unfortunate he who is ſurpriſed by a whirlwind at noon, in the middle of that ſolitude! If he has not a tent in which he can take ſhelter, he is attacked by torrents of burning duſt, which, filling his eyes and his mouth, deprive him of reſpiration and of life. The moſt prudent method is, to make this journey by night; at break of day the traveller diſcovers the palm-trees and the ſycamores *(m)*, which crown the banks

(m) The ſycamore of Egypt produces a fig, that grows on the trunk of the tree, and not at the extremity of the branches. It is eatable, but rather dry. This tree becomes very thick and buſhy; it ſeldom grows ſtraight; in general it bends, and becomes crooked. Its branches, extending horizontally, and very

banks of the Nile, and he arrives at Roſetta, bathed in ſweat and dew.

When after a long abode, in the midſt of ruins, and a very fatiguing journey, one finds one's ſelf in a cheerful town, ſurrounded with groves and verdure, the ſoul expands, and one is more diſpoſed to enjoy all the beauties of nature. Such is the ſituation of the traveller who has juſt quitted Alexandria to reſide at Roſetta. Eſcaped from the horrors of the deſart, he thinks himſelf tranſported into a new Eden, where every thing preſents the image of abundance.

Roſetta, called *Raſchid* by the Arabs, is ſituated on the ancient Bolbitine branch, to which it gives its name. It was founded in the eighth century *(n)*. The heaps of ſand

very far, afford a beautiful ſhade. Its leaf is divided, and its wood, which is impregnated with a bitter juice, is not liable to be worm-eaten. The ſycamore lives many ages.

(n) Father Sicard, Pocock, Nieburh, and the other travellers have not ſettled the period of the foundation of Roſetta. *Elmacin*, p. 152, tells us that it was built during the reign of *Elmetouakkel*, Caliph of

ſand which the Nile is continually accumulating, no longer permitting veſſels to reach as far as Faoüé. This town was built at the mouth of the river, but it is already two leagues from it. Abulfeda tells us that it was very inconſiderable in the thirteenth century *(o)*. Two hundred years after it was not much encreaſed. But when the Ottomans added Egypt to their conqueſts, they neglected the ſupport of the canals. That of Faoüé ceaſing to be navigable, Roſetta became the emporium of the merchandize of Alexandria and Cairo. Commerce ſoon made it flouriſh, and it is at this day one of the handſomeſt

Bagdad, towards the year 870 of our æra, and under the pontificate of Coſma, patriarch of the Jacobites at Alexandria. Mr. Maillet does not date its foundation above one hundred years back, and thinks it has replaced Canopus, which is an error. Proſper Alpinus has committed the ſame fault.

(o) Raſchid balidé ala garbi el Nil el garbi and meſabbo ſil bahr. Roſetta is a ſmall town on the weſtern bank of the Nile, near its mouth. Belon, who travelled in Egypt in 1530, ſays, that Roſetta was much ſmaller than Faoüé. Roſetta is at preſent much larger than that town.

towns

towns in Egypt. It extends along the weſtern bank of the Nile, and is above a league in length, by a quarter of a league in breadth. There is no remarkable place in it, nor any one ſtreet quite regular, but all the houſes built with terraces, well diſpoſed, and well kept, have an air of cleanlineſs and elegance, which is very pleaſing. Within them are vaſt apartments, where there is a continual ſupply of freſh air, from a great number of windows always open. The blinds and tranſparent linen, that they ſtretch over them, keep out the rays of the ſun, afford a moderate light, and temper the exceſſive heats. The only public buildings worthy of notice, are the Moſques, with their lofty minarets, of a very light architecture, and conſtructed with much boldneſs. They produce a very pictureſque effect in a town, where all the roofs are flat, and throw great variety into the picture. The houſes in general have a view of the Nile, and of the Delta, which form a moſt magnificent ſpectacle. The river is always covered with veſſels, mounting

and deſcending with oars or under ſail. The tumult of the harbour, the joy of the mariners, their noiſy muſic, exhibit a moving and animated ſcene. The Delta, that immenſe garden, where the earth is never wearied of production, furniſhes the whole year, a ſucceſſion of harveſts, of vegetables, of flowers, and of fruits. This abundant variety ſatisfies, at once, the heart and the eye. It produces various ſpecies of cucumbers, and delicious melons. The fig, the orange, the banana, the pomegranate, are there of the moſt exquiſite flavour. How much cultivation would ſtill add to their excellence, if the Egyptians underſtood the art of engrafting.

To the north of the town are gardens, where lemon and orange-trees, date-trees, and ſycamores are planted at random. This diſorder is not graceful, but the mixture of theſe trees, their foliage, which affords an arch impenetrable to the rays of the ſun, with the flowers ſpontaneouſly diſperſed throughout theſe groves, render the ſhade of them delightful.

When

When the whole atmoſphere is on fire, when the perſpiration is burſting from every pore, when man, panting from the exceſſive heat, ſighs after coolneſs as eagerly as the ſick after health, with what joy does he not go to breathe under theſe charming bowers, by the ſide of the rivulet that waters them! It is there that the Turk, holding in his hands a long pipe of jaſmin adorned with amber, thinks himſelf already tranſported into the garden of delights promiſed him by Mahomet. Cold, indifferent, almoſt void of reflection, he ſmokes a whole day without wearineſs. Living without deſire, and without ambition, he never caſts a curious look towards futurity. That activity which torments us, that activity, the ſoul of all our talents, is a ſtranger to him. Content with what he poſſeſſes, he neither invents nor brings any thing to perfection; his life appears to us a long ſleep; and ours ſeems to him a continual ſtate of intoxication: but whilſt we are running after that happineſs which eludes us, he enjoys peaceably the bleſſings offered him by nature, and which every day

day preſents to him, without troubling himſelf about to-morrow.

It is in theſe gardens, that young Georgian girls, ſold into ſlavery by their inhuman parents, lay aſide with the veil that covers them, that decency they obſerve in public. Free from all reſtraint, they there perform laſcivious dances, ſing tender airs, and recite romances, which diſplay the natural picture of their manners and their pleaſures. Born in a temperate climate, they have received from nature a ſoul full of energy, and adapted to the tumultuous paſſions; tranſported into Egypt, the fire of the atmoſphere, the perfume of the orange-flower, the emanations of the aromatic plants convey voluptuouſneſs into all their ſenſes; it is then that their whole attention is devoted to one object; one only deſire torments them, one only want makes itſelf moſt powerfully to be felt; and the conſtraint of their ſituation adds violence to their paſſion.

Commerce conſtitutes the principal wealth of the inhabitants of Roſetta. The importation of foreign merchandize to Cairo,

and

and of the productions of Egypt into the port of Alexandria, employs a great number of mariners. They make uſe of *Scherms (p)*, light boats, with a lateen ſail, which, being without decks, are very dangerous. A ſudden guſt of wind throws them on their ſide, and ſinks them. The *Bogaz (q)*, ſo they call the bar at the mouth of the Nile, is to them a formidable ſhoal. The waters of the river combat with the ſea to find a paſſage. When the wind freſhens, the waves there run mountain-high, and form whirlpools, which ſwallow up veſſels. The bogaz is very ſhallow, and in the ſpace of a league, there is uſually only one paſſage of a few toiſes breadth, where ſhips can paſs. This paſſage is continually ſhifting. Night and day a boatman is ſounding with the lead in his hand, to point out to navigators the courſe they muſt purſue; but

(p) *Scherm* ſignifies the velocity with which the boats cut the water. The ſailors of Provence (in France, who are the principal European navigators to this country) have corrupted this word, and call it *germ*.

(q) The word *Bogaz* expreſſes the agitation of the waves.

frequently

frequently all their ſkill is unable to maſter the wind and waves; they miſs the paſſage, ſtrike on the ſand, and in a few minutes, all is overwhelmed in a whirlpool of mud and water. Every year is marked by a great number of ſhipwrecks. Several have happened ſince I have been in this country. It was but yeſterday that a veſſel richly laden periſhed on the bogaz. The paſſengers threw themſelves into the water. An old man, worn down with years, holding by the maſt, diſappeared with it. Three young girls were ſwallowed up, after ſtruggling a long time againſt the waves and the current. Two robuſt mariners got to land. A woman of thirty years of age, who, with her girdle, had faſtened a child ſhe was ſuckling, ſwam with vigour; the deſire of ſaving her ſon ſuſtained her courage. After an hour's reſiſtance againſt the violence of the waves, this tender mother was on the point of periſhing, a victim to her maternal love. The boatmen perceiving her, plunged into the Nile, and flew to her ſuccour. Spent with fatigue, ſhe was ſcarcely able to ſupport

port herſelf. They ſwam to her ſide, raiſed her up, and brought her ſafely to the ſhore. Theſe melancholy ſcenes are frequent. The bar of the Nile is totally ſhut during two months of the year, and the commerce of Alexandria is interrupted. But ſhould it become altogether impracticable; ſhould all the ſhips in Egypt periſh, the Ottoman government would not remove one inch of ground of the canal of Faoüé, to render it navigable. It ſuffers every thing to go to ruin, and repairs nothing.

I have much more to ſay to you on the ſubject of Roſetta; but as I intend to prolong my ſtay in that town, I ſhall wait until obſervation, and the ſociety of the inhabitants enable me to tranſmit you freſh details.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER IV.

An account of Roſetta, its origin, commerce, inhabitants, and gardens; and of the proceſſion of the Pſilli, *or the eaters of ſerpents.*

To Mr. L. M.

Roſetta.

ROSETTA, Sir, is a curious place of reſidence for an European. A thouſand new objects ſtrike his eye. He thinks himſelf tranſported into another world. The human race, the productions of nature, every thing is different. A profound ſilence reigns in the town, uninterrupted by the noiſe of any carriage. Camels ſupply their place. The inhabitants march deliberately along, without ſuffering any thing to diſcompoſe their gravity. Long robes hang down to their heels. Their heads are covered with heavy turbans, or bound round with a ſhawl *(r)*. They cut their hair, and let their beards grow.

(r) The *ſchale* or ſhawl, is a long piece of ſtuff made of ſilk or wool, which they wrap round the head.

The

The girdle is made uſe of by both ſexes. The citizen is armed with a knife, the ſoldier with a ſabre, and a pair of piſtols. The women of the lower claſs, whoſe dreſs conſiſts of a large blue ſhift, and a long pair of drawers, have their faces covered with a piece of linen, with holes oppoſite to the eyes. The rich wear a large white veil, with a cloak of black ſilk, that wraps up their whole body. One would imagine they were in domino. A ſtranger dares hardly look at them; it would be a crime to ſpeak to them. But theſe maſks are not ſcrupulous in making ſigns, nor in ogling. As this is the only language which can be ſpoken in public, it is more expreſſive, carried to greater lengths, and brought to more perfection here than in Europe. Every thing is ſaid, and wonderfully well underſtood, without opening the lips.

The country round it is as different from the environs of Paris, as Roſetta is from a town in France. An immenſe ſurface, without a mountain or hill, interſected by innumerable canals, is covered with harveſts

veſts; tufted ſycamores, whoſe unperiſhable wood protects the labourer's earthen cottage, into which he retires during the winter, for in ſummer he ſleeps under the ſhade; date-trees collected in groves, or ſcattered over the plain, crowned at top with enormous cluſters of a ſweet and wholeſome fruit. Caſſia-trees, whoſe bending branches are decked out with yellow flowers, and bear a pod *(s)*, well known in medicine; orange and lemon trees, that have never been mutilated with the ſciſſars, and which, extending their perfumed boughs, form vaulted roofs impenetrable to the rays of the ſun. Theſe are the principal trees to be met with in the Delta. Winter never ſtrips them of their leaves. They are decorated the whole year, as well as in the firſt days of ſpring.

The ſoil is a black mud, the fertility of which appears to be inexhauſtible. It is con-

(s) This ſiliqua or pod, reſembles a ſmall long cucumber. It is the caſſia made uſe of medicine. The caſſia of Egypt is much preferable to that of America; but as it is dearer, the druggiſts neglect it. The Egyptians uſe the flower of the caſſia-tree as a laxative.

tinually

tinually productive without ever lying fallow. They are juſt preparing ſome rice-fields. Oxen with bandages before their eyes, turn draw-wheels, which empty the water into a baſon from whence it ſpreads over the fields, which are ſuffered to remain a week overflowed. When the ground has thoroughly imbibed it, men, women, and children, all naked up to their waiſts, go into the mud, wherein they ſink very deep, and eaſily take up all the roots of the plants. This labour finiſhed, they pluck the rice (t) of a foot high, and tranſplant it into the rice-field. Covered with water every day, it grows with an aſtoniſhing rapidity. At the end of July the lands lying on the banks of the Nile, and on the borders of the canals are planted with it. It is cut in November, and the ſheaves ſpread on the ground. A man ſeated on a low cart, drawn by two oxen, and which has ſharp wheels, drives over the ſtraw, and cuts it into pieces. It is then winnowed, ſeparated from the grain, and carried

(t) This word comes from the Arabic *rouz*.

into barns where they make uſe of a mill to take off the huſk. Thus prepared, it is mixed with ſalt, and ſhut up in *couffes (u)*, made of the leaves of the date-trees.

The rice in the neighbourhood of Roſetta is called *Sultani*. It is a miſtake to imagine that ſome of it is brought to Marſeilles. Deſtined for the ſupply of Conſtantinople, its exportation into foreign countries is moſt rigorouſly prohibited. It is at Damietta that the people of Provence go to ſeek their cargoes.

As ſoon as the rice is cut, the planters tear up the ſtubble, give a ſlight tillage to the earth, and ſow barley, which very ſoon ripens. They who prefer hay, overflow the field immediately after the rice crop, and ſow it with lucerne *(x)*. It ſprings up with ſuch rapidity, that at the end of twenty days, it is a foot and a half high, and grows ſo thick, that its ſurface appears one ſolid maſs of verdure. They mow it

(u) The word *couffe* is Arabic. It ſignifies the oval baſkets made of the date-leaves, wherein the rice is kept.

(x) The Arabs call it *Barſim*; there is no other kind of hay in Egypt.

three

three times before the ſeaſon proper for tranſplanting the rice, ſo that the ſame field in the courſe of twelve months, furniſhes two harveſts, one of rice, the other of barley, or four crops, one of rice, and three of hay. This abundance is no where but in the Delta, where the grounds, lower than in the Thebais, admit of being watered the whole year, by the means of canals and wheels, which raiſe the water.

The town of Roſetta has linen manufactories. The flax of the country, which is long, ſoft, and ſilky, would make very beautiful linen, if they knew how to employ it; but the ſpinſters are very inexpert, the thread they make at the ſpindle is clumſy, hard, and uneven. The linens they bleach ſerve for the table, the reſt, dyed blue, are employed for the clothing of the people.

In my excurſions in the environs of Roſetta, I went to ſee the caſtle built by the Mamelukes, to defend the entrance of the river; it is a ſquare building, flanked with four towers, lined with cannon. It is ſituated a league to the northward of the town, on the weſtern bank of

the river. A platform furniſhed with artillery, is oppoſite to it. Theſe two forts altho' very inconſiderable, would be ſufficient to ſtop veſſels from entering, did the Turks know how to make uſe of cannon; but they have here no occaſion for it. Nature has taken care to defend the mouth of the Nile, by raiſing a dangerous bar, the terror of navigators. It would be impoſſible even for gun-boats, to paſs it, if the boatman of the *Bogaz* were not to point out the courſe.

To the ſouthward of the town, on the bank of the Nile is a ſmall eminence, from the middle of which riſes an ancient tower half buried by time. A large ſemicircular baſon, at the foot of it, announces a port which has been choked up by the ſand. A Turkiſh merchant having made them dig a few years ago at the bottom of this hillock, found twenty beautiful marble pillars. This diſcovery was his ruin. The Beys imagined that he had carried off a treaſure from it, and ſtripped him of his fortune *(y)*. The

(y) Meſſieurs Nieburh, Shaw, Pocock, Father Sicard, take no notice of it. Mr. Maillet, who was a mi-

The learned who have viſited Egypt, have not endeavoured to diſcover what town formerly ſtood here. Mr. Danville ſuſpects that the ancient Bolbitina muſt have been at a very ſmall diſtance from the ſpot on which Roſetta now ſtands. He is not deceived; for the ruins I deſcribe are at the extremity of the town, and can only belong to the Bolbitina, which Stephen of Byzantium ſpeaks of, and which gives its name to one of the branches of the Nile.

This place is very pictureſque; the tower falling into ruins, is ſurrounded by tombs. To the weſtward is a deſart plain, whoſe burning extent the eye cannot look over without horror. The infinite number of rays reflected from the ſands, injures the ſight, and the picture of ſterility inſpires the mind with gloom. But on turning to the eaſt, what a ſtriking contraſt! what a

a minute obſerver, has remarked that there had been an ancient town at this place, and thought it was Canopus. But the ſituation of Canopus is ſo perfectly deſcribed by Strabo, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, &c. that it is impoſſible not to diſcover that *Aboukir* occupies its place.

delightful landſcape! It is a majeſtic river covered with boats; it is the Delta, where the graces of the ſpring, the beauty of the ſummer, the rich luxuriance of the autumn are moſt profuſely united. As far as the eye can carry you, you have verdure, fruits, and harveſts. Is not this the image of that Eden, where the Creator placed the firſt inhabitants of the world?

You are acquainted, Sir, with the Pſylli of antiquity, thoſe celebrated eaters of ſerpents, who amuſed themſelves with the bite of vipers, and the credulity of the people. Cyrene, a town ſituated to the weſt of Alexandria, formerly a dependency of Egypt, reckoned a great many of theſe people amongſt its inhabitants. You know that the unworthy Octavius, who wiſhed to gratify his vanity by chaining Cleopatra to his triumphal car, vexed at ſeeing that haughty female eſcape from him by death, made one of the Pſylli ſuck the wound made by the aſp which bit her. The attempt was fruitleſs; the poiſon had already corrupted the maſs of blood. She was not reſtored to life. Will you believe it,

Sir,

Sir, theſe very eaters of ſerpents ſtill exiſt in our days. A fact to which I was a witneſs will convince you of it.

Laſt week was celebrated the feaſt of *Sidi Ibrahim (z)*, which drew a vaſt concourſe of people to Roſetta. A Turk permitted me to come to his houſe to ſee the proceſſion. Seated at the window, I obſerved attentively this new ſpectacle. The different bodies of artizans gravely marched along under their reſpective banners. The ſtandard of Mahomet, which was carried in triumph, attracted a vaſt crowd. Every body was deſirous of touching, of kiſſing it, of putting it to his eyes. Such as were fortunate enough to partake of that favour, returned contented. The tumult was inceſſantly renewed. At length came the Cheiks (the prieſts of the country) wearing long caps of leather, in the form of a mitre. They marched with ſolemn ſteps, chaunting the Coran. A few paces behind them, I perceived a band of madmen, with their arms

(z) *The Lord Abraham.* The Arabs deſcended from Abraham by Iſhmaël, hold him in great veneration, and celebrate a feaſt annually in honour of him.

bare, and a wild look, holding in their hands enormous ſerpents, which were twiſted round their bodies, and were endeavouring to make their eſcape *(a)*. Theſe Pſylli, griping them forcibly by the neck, avoided their bite, and notwithſtanding their hiſſing, tore them with their teeth, and ate them up alive, the blood ſtreaming down from their polluted mouths. Others of the Pſylli were ſtriving to tear from them their prey; it was a ſtruggle who ſhould devour a ſerpent.

The populace followed them with amazement, and believed it to be a miracle. They paſs for perſons inſpired, and poſſeſſed by a ſpirit who deſtroys the effect of the bite of the ſerpent. This deſcription, which I give you after nature, at firſt frightened me, and then made me reflect on man, that ſtrange being, for whom poiſon becomes food; that credulous being, whoſe eyes are not opened by the ſpectacle re-

(a) The Pſylli, who inhabited Cyrene and its neighbourhood, had a ſecret antidote againſt the bite of ſerpents. *Strabo, lib.* 17. It was perhaps by eating their fleſh that they deſtroyed the effect of their bite.

newed

newed every year; and who in the blindneſs of his ignorance, is ready to worſhip as a God, his fellow creature who has the art to impoſe on his underſtanding. You ſee, Sir, thoſe ancient uſages are not loſt in a country where cuſtom, that imperious tyrant of the world, has peculiarly eſtabliſhed her throne, and her altars.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER V.

Journey from Roſetta to Boulac. Obſervations on the manner of navigating the Nile; the canals which are detached from it; the towns, villages, and hamlets on their banks; the cultivation of the lands, their productions, and the cuſtoms of the inhabitants.

To Mr. L. M.

Roſetta, the October, 1 1777.

HERE we are, Sir, on board a *mach*. It is a large boat with two maſts, which has a handſome chamber, and a cabinet hung with matting curiouſly worked. A tent raiſed on the deck, forms a ſhelter from the heat of the ſun. It is from this Belvidere, that I ſhall deſcribe to you the objects that ſtrike me. It is now one o'clock; we weigh anchor; the ſail is filled; the north wind, which blows almoſt conſtantly at this ſeaſon, carries us up the river

river very eaſily againſt the current. We advance rapidly, and the waves foam under the bow of our little veſſel. Already the lofty minarets of Roſetta diſappear in the clouds. Charming proſpects claim our attention every inſtant. The banks of the Nile are lined with reeds. The plain is covered with harveſts. The rice is nearly at maturity, and the wind agitating the ſurface, makes it reſemble the waves of the ſea. The peaſant, occupied in directing the watering neceſſary for his fields, opens or ſhuts his dykes at pleaſure. The ox turns the noiſy wheel which raiſes up the water. Along the plain, different hamlets, compoſed of earthen huts, preſent themſelves to view, ſome houſes built with bricks dried in the ſun, and a ſmall moſque, whoſe minaret is loſt amongſt the tops of the trees. Surrounded by orange and palm-trees, and ſycamores, they ſeem to ſpring out of the verdure. We have paſſed ſeveral villages, and an iſland whoſe ſummit is crowned with watermelons, of which we have laid in our ſtock. It is impoſſible to be ſurfeited with them.

them. Nouriſhed in a fruitful ſoil, ripened by a burning ſun, the pulp diſſolves in the mouth, and furniſhes a ſugary water, which is delicious in this hot country. But what renders them infinitely more valuable, is, that they are very wholeſome, and may be eaten to exceſs without any inconvenience. This iſland is between the villages of *Berimbal*, and *Meballet el Emir*.

Before we arrived at *Deïrout*, a handſome town on the weſtern bank of the Nile, we ſaw the mouth of a canal, that probably diſcharges itſelf into the lake of Behire, by which there was a communication with Canopus. The ſun is now on the decline. He gilds with his departing rays the top of the minarets of Faoüé, which we perceive in the ſhade. We ſhall paſs the night before that town.

From on board, the 2d October.

Faoüé, Sir, is greatly fallen from its former conſequence. When Belon *(b)* travelled

(b) Belon, as I have already ſaid, travelled in Egypt in the fifteenth century, about fifteen years after

travelled in Egypt, this was the largeſt town in the country after Cairo. The Venetians had a conſul there. The merchandize was tranſported up the canal which conveys the water to Alexandria. Since it is no longer navigable, Roſetta has become a flouriſhing place, and Faoüé, with its commerce, has loſt the ſource of its riches. I have run through it with the Janiſſary who accompanies me. Large buildings falling into ruins; ſquares filled with rubbiſh; brick houſes badly taken care of; ſome moſques without ornaments; an impoveriſhed people, and few in number; ſuch are the ſad remains of the celebrated city of the Mileſians *(c)*. In the neighbourhood of Canopus, ſhe has preſerved a tint of her corrupted manners. The inhabitants permit the women of pleaſure

after the Ottoman conqueſt. This valuable naturaliſt viſited a great part of the eaſtern world, and brought to France ſeveral new plants. It is to him we are indebted for the ever-green oak, which preſerves a faint image of the ſpring during the winter.

(c) I have ſaid in my firſt letter, that the Mileſians built the town which new bears the name of Faoüé.

publicly

publicly to occupy a kan, and ſhut their eyes to the diſorders they commit. They attack the paſſengers, and perform in their preſence, the ſongs and dances cuſtomary in that country. Nothing can be more libertine that their ſongs; nothing more laſcivious than their looks and geſtures. In the environs of this town was Naucrates, founded alſo by the Mileſians.

From on board, the 3d October.

The northerly wind, always favourable to our wiſhes, has haſtened the dawn; the ſailors have ſpread the ſail. We overcome with eaſe the rapidity of the current. We have paſſed ſeveral low iſlands almoſt under water, and ſome hamlets, that we perceive through clumps of verdure. We are five miles from Faoüé, oppoſite the mouth of the canal formed by Alexander, and which the negligence of the Turks has ſuffered to be partly choked up. Following its courſe, at four leagues within the country is the ſmall town of *Damanhour*, inhabited by Copti and Mahometans. It is the *Hermopolis parva* of Ptolemy. Strabo places

places it on the river, but by that muſt be underſtood the canal of Alexandria. Abulfeda has marked its ſituation well *(d)*. The neighbouring country produces a great deal of flax, corn, barley, and cotton, which is an annual plant.

As we advance, we perceive a multitude of boats going up the river under ſail; others that go down, and drive with the ſtream. The mariners amuſe themſelves with their rough and noiſy muſic. They mix their hoarſe voices with the ſound of the tambour de baſque, and of the wild flute made of reeds. Theſe concerts do not charm the ear; but the joy they inſpire,

(d) Damanhour is a town of Egypt, ſituated to the ſouth-eaſt of Alexandria, near to the canal that conveys the water there. It is the capital of the *Behiré*. It is called *Damanhour* from the deſart. *Oua men balad maſr Damanhour. Oua hie ſi-l-chark, oua-l-genoub. Oua hie caadat elbehiré. Oua leha Kaliz Eleſcanderié. Oua taaref Damanhour el ouaſbech.*

Abulfeda. Deſcription of Egypt.

It is ſo called to diſtinguiſh it from two towns of the ſame name, and becauſe it is not far from the deſart, where are the lakes of *Natroun*.

reaches

reaches the ſoul of thoſe who hear them. Droves of oxen low in the meadows. The peaſants, diſperſed over the plain, are watering their crops. The girls deſcend from their villages to waſh their linen, and draw water. They are all at their toilet. Their pitchers, and their clothes are on the bank. They rub their bodies with the mud of the Nile, plunge into the river, and ſport amongſt the waves. Several of them are now ſwimming around our boat, crying out *ïa ſidi at maïdi*, Seignior, give us a medin *(e)*. They ſwim with a great deal of grace. Their hair flows in treſſes on their ſhoulders. Their ſkin is very brown and ſwarthy, but they are in general well made. The facility with which they bear up againſt the rapidity of the current, proves what ſtrength and ſuppleneſs the moſt delicate perſons may acquire by exerciſe. *(f)*. So after waſhing her garments, was the beautiful Nauſicaa, bathing

(e) The medin is a ſmall piece of copper coin ſilvered over, which is worth ſix liards of France, or three farthings Engliſh.

(f) Odyſſey, book the 6th.

herſelf with her companions, when Ulyſſes appeared quite naked before them(g). The wind freſhens; our bark cuts the water with rapidity. The courſe of the Nile is very crooked, and every elbow preſents us a freſh landſcape. Here appears a village which loſes itſelf in the horizon; there ſtands a large burgh with its moſque near

(g) Ulyſſes was ſhipwrecked on the coaſt of the Pheacians. Overcome with fatigue, he had fallen aſleep amongſt the buſhes, on a bed of leaves. Nauſicaa had come with her companions to waſh their garments on the bank of the river. After bathing, they amuſed themſelves with throwing ſtones. One of them falling near Ulyſſes, awakened him. He went towards the place from whence he heard the cries. At the ſight of a man who had nothing to cover his nakedneſs but the bough of a tree, all the ſlaves ran away. The daughter of Alcinous alone remained. She liſtened with dignity to the tale of the unhappy ſtranger, comforted him, called her followers, and commanded them to waſh him, and clothe him with a tunic and a cloke. The poet has painted with wonderful art in Nauſicaa, the nobleneſs of a perſon of high rank, who does not fly at the ſight of a man without clothing, from a certain confidence in her own virtue, and from the reflection, that he is poſſibly an unfortunate perſon, whom ſhe may have it in her power to relieve.

to a wood of orange-trees. On every ſide we diſcover pigeon-houſes of a pyramidal form, where innumerable flights of pigeons are collected. Fed in theſe fertile plains, their fleſh is fat and of a delicious flavour; they only coſt three medins, (or two-pence farthing Engliſh) the couple. The Egyptians manure with their dung the grounds wherein they plant their water-melons. Night approaches. The Nile is filled with pirates, who attack the boats under cover of the darkneſs, cut off the heads of the paſſengers who are off their guard, and rob them of their effects. We have caſt anchor near a little hamlet. The captain has collected his crew, and is very gravely recounting to them many wonderful tales. His audience ſitting round, is liſtening to him with the greateſt attention.

From on board, the 4th October.

We have paſſed the night between a little iſland and the mouth of the canal of Menouf. This canal comes out of the branch of Damietta, and runs into that of Roſetta,

Roſetta, interſecting the Delta in an oblique direction. It is fifteen leagues long, very wide, and is navigable for boats three months of the year. At four leagues from its mouth is the pleaſant town of Menouf *(h)*, the capital of the province of that name, and the reſidence of a Bey. It is ſituated in the midſt of rich fields ſown with corn, beans, *bamier (i)*, and *dourra (k)*, and ſhaded by groves of tamarind and date-trees, inhabited by vaſt numbers of turtle-doves, which, never hearing

(h) The Delta is divided into two provinces, in which two Beys reſide. Menouf is the capital of the upper, and *Mehallé el Kebire* of the lower province. The former is called *Menouſié*, the latter *Garbié*.

(i) The bamier is a plant which produces a pyramidal huſk, with ſeveral compartments, of the colour of a lemon, and filled with muſky ſeeds. This huſk dreſſed with meat is a wholeſome food, and has a very agreeable flavour. The Egyptians make great uſe of it in their ragouts.

(k) The dourra, or millet of India, is a lofty plant, with the leaf of a reed. It bears a membrane, which contains a number of ſeeds, of which the peaſants make their bread. Tournefort calls it *milium arundinaceum plano alboque ſemine*. Linnæus, *holcus dora glumis villoſis ſeminibus compreſſis ariſtatis*.

the terrifying noiſe of powder, are as tame as domeſtic pigeons.

From ſun-riſe the north wind had filled our ſails. We paſs between iſlands on which the graſs is very high, and where they are driving the buffaloes to paſture. A ſhepherd ſeated on the neck of the foremoſt of the drove, deſcends into the river, ſmacks his whip, and leads the way. The whole drove follow in a row, lowing as they ſwim along to their paſture, and diſcharging out the water from their wide noſtrils. Theſe animals live in the Nile during the heats; they plunge up to the ſhoulders, and feed on tender graſs that grows along the banks.

Behind a wood of date-trees and ſycamores, which terminates our proſpect to the ſouthward, ariſe the lofty minarets of *Terrâné*. This ſmall town, ſituated on the weſtern bank of the Nile, is only eight leagues from the monaſtery of St. Macaire. The *natroun*, which the Egyptians make great uſe of, is brought thither from two lakes. A few miles higher, is the little harbour of Ouar-

dan

dan *(l)*, under the ſhade of the palm-trees, where Father Sicard burnt heaps of ancient manuſcripts which were ſhut up in a pigeon-houſe, under pretence that they were books of magic. Thus does blind fanaticiſm deſtroy, in a moment, the treaſures of whole ages! The ſun has run half his courſe; we have left Ouardan on our right; if the wind holds we ſhall be this evening at *Boulac*.

Before all the villages we paſs, the children of both ſexes are exerciſing themſelves in ſwimming. They cover their bodies with mud, plunge into the water, return to the bank, and again throw themſelves into it. Swimming is a pleaſure

(l) The following is the paſſage of Father Sicard: "I had intelligence that there was in that village a "pigeon-houſe filled with papers, full of magic cha-"racters, which had been purchaſed of ſome religious "Copti and ſchiſmatics. Without meeting with "any reſiſtance, I made ſuch uſe of them as was my "duty, and I fixed up in their place a crucifix of "Jeruſalem, which the Copti revere with a great deal "of devotion." *Lettres Edifiantes*, p. 53. It appears that he burnt, on the ſpot, theſe manuſcripts filled with hieroglyphic characters.

which neceſſity has made a law for them. All Egypt in fact is interſected by wide and deep canals, which are full of water in the time of the inundation. It is often neceſſary to croſs ſeveral of theſe, to go from one village to another. On theſe occaſions men and women throw off their ſhirts and drawers, and, making a diadem of them round their heads, ſwim over the river. But what would ſurpriſe an European, is to ſee the Egyptian women, who, under theſe circumſtances, preſerve only a ſmall piece of linen to cover themſelves, put it on their *faces*. A Turk would find no difficulty in explaining this phænomenon.

We are arrived at the point of the Delta. It is here that the Nile divides itſelf into two branches, and is two miles wide at this place, called by the Arabs *batn el bakara*, the belly of the cow. We now have the firſt ſight of the tops of the two large pyramids, which are at eight leagues diſtance from us. The ſetting ſun tips them with his departing rays. They reſemble ſummits of two mountains that loſe themſelves in the clouds. All hail to the two

moſt

moſt ancient monuments of the induſtry of man! The very ſight of them inſpires a religious awe. How many generations have diſappeared from the face of the globe, ſince theſe enormous maſſes have reſted on the foot of the mountain they are built on! Night has covered them with his ſhade. Our ſailors, now near the end of their voyage, make the air reſound with their ſhouts of joy. The lanthorn is juſt lighted, which is to prevent us from being run againſt, and perhaps ſunk, by the prodigious number of boats which mount and deſcend the river. They have all got fires in them, and we are ſailing in the midſt of an illumination, the appearances of which vary every inſtant. It is eleven o'clock at night. We are caſting anchor before *Boulac*, the port of Grand Cairo.

LETTER VI.

Deſcription of Grand Cairo, the capital of Egypt. Reſearches concerning its origin, according to the authority of the moſt eminent Arabian writers.

To Mr. L. M.

FOR theſe nine months paſt, Sir, I have been an inhabitant of Grand Cairo, that immenſe city, where the Europeans crawl in the duſt, and where the name of Frank *(m)* is a reproach. The fanaticiſm of the Mahometan religion reigns here triumphant. It is here that the Muſſulman, eat up with ignorance, thinks himſelf the moſt ſublime being in the univerſe, and attributes to himſelf with a ſecret complacency, the words contained in the

(m) The moſt abuſive term the Egyptians can beſtow on any perſon is to call him *Frank*; which is the general denomination of all the Europeans amongſt them.

note.

note *(n)*. This oracle, which is believed by every one of them, nouriſhes their pride. They conſequently trample under feet all thoſe who have not their faith. To avoid inſults from the populace, and to fulfil the intention of my voyage, I have aſſumed the Turkiſh dreſs and manner. My ſkin, burnt by the ſun, is become Egyptian. A ſhawl covers my head and conceals my hair. My cheeks are ſhaded by long whiſkers. Thanks to this metamorphoſis, and to the cuſtom I have of ſpeaking Arabic. I walk about the town, I run over its environs, and I live with this ſtrange people. Curioſity very often leads me farther than is juſtified by prudence; but the voice of reaſon is weak, when a commanding paſſion has the ſway. It is to this deſire of ſeeing every thing, that you will be indebted for the

(n) You are the moſt excellent people in the univerſe. You enjoin equity, you forbid crimes, you believe in God, &c. The Coran, *(tranſlated by the author)* vol. 1ſt, page 66; and this other verſe:

Certainly the Chriſtians, the infidel Jews, and the idolaters, are the moſt perverſe of men, but the believers who practiſe virtue, are the moſt perfect work of heaven. Coran, vol. 2. page 246.

details

details I ſhall give you, which will have at leaſt the merit of *truth* to recommend them.

Grand Cairo is a modern town. The oriental hiſtorians eſtabliſh this fact ſo clearly, as to leave no room for doubt. I will give you their own words; for when one wiſhes to treat a particular point of their hiſtory, themſelves can only furniſh ſuch information as may be relied on.

" *(o)* In the year 358 of the Hegyra, " Jauhar, general of Moaz, ſprung from " the princes of the Kirouan, came into " Egypt at the head of a formidable army, " and took it from the Abaſſides *(p)*. " Thenceforward the prayer was in the

(o) *Elmacin*, page 222.

(p) The caliphs of Bagdad ſleeping on their thrones, were gradually ſtripped of their vaſt dominions, by the governors, and nothing remained to them of that power which had threatened the whole world, but a pompous title, and the barren prerogative of being the firſt named in the prayers of all the moſques. The conqueſt of Moaz deprived them even of this honour, which was not reſtored to them till 207 years after, when *Salla Eddin*, of the family of the Aioubites, became maſter of Egypt.

" name

" name of the Fatimites *(q)*. The con-
" queror being in want of a place to eſta-
" bliſh his ſoldiers, laid the foundation of
" *Elkahera (r)* built a palace there to lodge
" the emperor, and made the great men
" and the ſoldiers inhabit the new town.
" Four years after Moaz quitted his do-
" minions in Barbary, and came to enjoy
" his conqueſt. That year the building
" of Grand Cairo was finiſhed, and the
" empire of the Fatimites eſtabliſhed.

" Moaz, in an injunction he gives his
" ſon, makes uſe of theſe words; The
" inſtant of the foundation of their town
" was marked by the aſcenſion of Mars *(s)*,

(q) The Fatimite caliphs derived their origin from Ali who eſpouſed Fatima, the daughter of Mahomet. In the year 296 of the Hegira, they founded a kingdom on the coaſt of Africa, and reigned there till the year 567.

(r) The town called by the Europeans Grand Cairo.

(s) The ditches were dug which were to ſurround the town, the materials were prepared to fill them, the aſtronomers obſerved with their inſtruments, the paſſage of Mars over the meridian; a ſignal announced that moment, and the foundation of *Elkahera* was laid amidſt ſhouts of joy.

of

" of that Mars who ſubdues the univerſe. " It is on account of this horoſcope that I " have given it the name of *Elkahera (t)*" (the Victorious).

The foundation of Grand Cairo having been the ſubject of error and diſpute amongſt the learned, and amongſt travellers *(u)*, permit me, Sir, to add to the teſtimony of Elmacin, the deſcription of Abulfeda *(x)*. This

(t) The word *elkaber* is the name of the planet Mars, and ſignifies at the ſame time victorious.

(u) Proſper Alpinus ſays, that Grand Cairo is the Memphis of the ancients. *Voyage d'Egypte*, page 17. Father Sicard pretends that Grand Cairo was built by *Ebn el Aas*, Omar's lieutenant. *Lettres edifiantes*, page 466. The paſſages I quote are ſufficient to refute thoſe European writers, whoſe opinion, deſtitute of proofs, contradicts all the monuments of oriental hiſtory.

(x) " Oua ala janeb el Foſtat men chamaliha, me- " dinet elkahera, ahedſha elkolfa elfatemioun. Ella- " zin Zaharou Belgarb, tom melekou el maſr; oua " kan aoual men melek menhom bemaſr Moazebn " Elmanſor . . . . . Oua akhtat elkahera fi ſéné " teſſaa oua khamſin, oua talat maïat; oua canet el- " kahera biſtanlebe tailoun, ala elcarb men medinet " melkhom elmaroufé belcataïah; oua ſamet elkahera " l'eltefaoual ai ickhor men khalef amrha; oua elka- " hera

This writer, celebrated both as a geographer and hiſtorian, gives many intereſting particulars, which are no-where elſe to be met with.

" On the ſide of Foſtat *(y)*, towards the " north, is the town of *Elkahera*, which was " founded by the Fatimite caliphs. Theſe " princes who had founded an empire on " the coaſt of Barbary, made themſelves " maſters of Egypt. The firſt conqueror, " and who reigned there, was *Moaz*, ſon " of *Elmanſor* .... He laid the founda- " tion of Cairo in the year 359 of the He- " gira ..... The ſpot he built it on, " was a garden belonging to the ſon of " *Toulon (z)*, and which was near the " royal

" hera leiſt ala chatt el Nil, belfi charkio; oua el Foſtat " ala hafat el Nil; oua hie mahatt, ou acllaa lelmara- " keb, oua beſabab Zalek ſar el Foſtat actar rezca, " oua arkas aſaara men el kahera." *Abulfeda, De- " ſcription of Egypt.*

(y) Foſtat is the town we improperly call old Cairo.

(z) Toulon, a celebrated governor of Egypt, revolted againſt *Abou Elabbas, ſon of Elmetouakkel*, the 15th Abaſſid Caliph, in the year 264 of the Hegira, and made himſelf maſter of the country. His children only

"royal quarter of *Cataïah (a)*, where he "fixed his reſidence. The new town was "called *Elkabera* (the victorious), as a pre-"ſage of future triumphs over its enemies. "It is not, like Foſtat, ſituated on the Nile, "but a little to the eaſt of the river. The "ſituation of the latter is more favour-"able therefore for commerce. Boats come "there from all parts of Egypt, and every "article of living is very cheap."

The ſituation of Grand Cairo, as Abulfeda informs us, and as experience has convinced me every day, is not ſo advantageous as that of Foſtat. Its diſtance from the Nile is not its only diſadvantage. The barren chain of the Mokattam ſurrounds it to the eaſtward. This mountain,

ly reigned there till the year 292. Subdued by *Mohammed*, general of *Moctefi Billah*, the 17th Abaſſid Caliph, they were conveyed to Bagdad. *Elmacin.*

(a) Toulon built to the north of Foſtat, a ſuburb, ſo conſiderable as to obtain the name of the royal town of *Cataïah.* This ſuburb, which at preſent forms part of Grand Cairo, ſtill contains the magnificent moſque built there by that prince, and the palace he inhabited, known at this day by the name of *Calaa el kabech.*

totally

totally without verdure, preſents nothing to the eye but a dry ſand, and ſtones calcined by the ſun *(b)*. When the northerly wind does not blow, it reflects a ſuffocating heat upon the town. One breathes a fiery air, and coolneſs is no where to be found before the night. For a long time therefore, there was nothing but gardens, country-houſes, and barracks for the troops. It owed its ſudden encreaſe to an event I ſhall relate with pleaſure, becauſe it is connected with our hiſtory. " The French, " under king Luſignan, had extended their " conqueſts in Syria, and carried their victorious arms even into Egypt. In the " year 564, of the Hegira, they took *Bel-*

(b) " Oua fi ſéné arba oua ſettin oua khamſé maïat " elfrangi melekou belbes, oua nahabouha, oua catalou ahelha, oua eſrouhom; tom ſarou men belbes " oua nazelou ala elkahera oua haſerouha. Feharae " *Schaouar* medinet maſr raufan men en eimlekha el- " frangi; fe baquait elnar tehrokha arbaat oua khamſin ioum; oua ſaneh *ſchaouar* elfrangi, ala elf elf " dinar, iehmelha eleihom, fe hamal eleihom maïat " elf dinar, fe ſalhom en ierhelou an elkahera " leicdar alagema elmal oua haſalo, fe rahalou. *Abul-* " *feda.*

" *beis*

" *beis* by ſtorm, put a part of the inha-
" bitants to the ſword, and led the reſt
" into captivity. Encouraged by theſe
" ſucceſſes, they marched towards Grand
" Cairo, and took it. *Schaouar*, king of
" Egypt, fearing leſt Foſtat ſhould fall in-
" to their hands, ſet fire to it; the flames
" ſpread rapidly, and the town burnt for
" four and fifty days. This weak prince,
" unable to expel by force his enterprizing
" enemies, had recourſe to ſtratagem;
" he gave them a hundred thouſand di-
" nars (crowns of gold), and promiſed
" them a million, if they would leave the
" country. They quitted it, and loſt both
" their conqueſt, and the promiſed ſum.

Grand Cairo profited by the diſaſter of Foſtat. The wretched inhabitants abandoned their heaps of aſhes, to take refuge in the new town, which aſſumed the proud ſurname of *Maſr*, attached to the capital of Egypt. Salah Eddin *(c)* ſoon came to

(c) The famous *Salah Eddin*, who fought for twenty years againſt the Franks, and who almoſt entirely expelled them the eaſtern countries, was named gover-
nor

to eſtabliſh there the dynaſty of the Aioubites.

" In the year 572 *(d)* of the Hegira, " he built the walls that ſurround Grand " Cairo, and the caſtle ſituated on Mount " Mokattam. It is about 29300 cubits, " (three leagues) in circumference. They " worked at it until his death *(e)*."

The walls ſtill exiſt almoſt entire; but they are concealed in many places by rub-

nor of Egypt by *Nour Eddin* in the year 564 of the Hegira. Three years after he became king of it. He extended his conqueſts rapidly into Syria and Meſopotamia. This prince, born at *Tecrit*, a ſtrong place between Bagdad and Moſul, in the year 533 of the Hegira, died at Damaſcus, in the year 582.

(d) " Fi hade eſſéné (etnin oua khamſé maïat) amar " Salah Eddin beinan eſſour eddiar ala maſr elkahera, " oua elkalaat ala eggebal elmokattam. Oua dour " telk teſſaat oua acherin elf draa, oua talat maïat draa, " oua lam izel elaml il a en mat. *Life of Salah Eddin.*

(e) This paſſage formally deſtroys the opinion of Father Sicard, who ſays that this caſtle was built by queen Semiramis, and the opinion of Meſſieurs Shaw, Niebuhr, and a great many other writers, who take it for the fortreſs of Babylon, founded in Egypt by the Perſians.

biſh and by houſes. There are ſeveral gates, of a ſimple and majeſtic ſtyle of architecture. Theſe edifices, and ſome moſques merit the admiration of travellers. *Salah Eddin*, the patron of literature, built an univerſity in the quarter of *Caraffe*, and the handſome moſque which covers the tomb of *Schaffey*, the founder of one of the four ſects of the Sunnites *(f)*. It is ſtill exiſting; but the buildings of the univerſity are falling into ruins. The academy *Djamèh Elaſhar* (the moſque of flowers) replaced it. The arts and ſciences flouriſhed there until the moment that the Turks got poſſeſſion of Egypt. That epocha was their tomb. Enemies of every branch of human knowledge, they have extinguiſhed them throughout the whole extent of their vaſt empire.

Their ſtudies in our days are confined to theology, of which the innumerable commentators on the Coran have made an ob-

(f) The Sunnite ſects, called orthodox by the Mahometans, are thoſe of *Schafeï*, of *Haneſi*, of *Hanbali*, and of *Maleki*.

ſcure

ſcure chaos; the grammar, neceſſary for reading correctly that book, which includes their religion, and code of laws; and aſtrology, a ſcience inſeparable from an ignorant nation.

Grand Cairo until the 15th century, was one of the richeſt and moſt flouriſhing capitals in the world. It was the emporium of Europe and of Aſia. Its commerce extended from the ſtreights of Gibraltar, to the lower parts of India. The diſcovery of the Cape of Good Hope, and the conqueſt of the Ottomans, have robbed it of a great part of its ſplendor, and its opulence. But notwithſtanding many of the canals which conveyed thither the treaſures of the eaſt and of the weſt, are choked up, and although this town groans under the yoke of a Pacha and four-and-twenty beys, its admirable ſituation, and the fecundity of the ſoil of Egypt, procure it ſo many advantages, that in the circumference of three leagues, it ſtill contains an immenſe population, and great riches. I hope, Sir, that theſe hiſtorical

facts will ſerve to aſcertain the origin of Grand Cairo. Before I enter into further particulars, it appears proper to make you acquainted with *Foſtat*, which I have often ſpoken of. That ſhall be the ſubject of my firſt letter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER VII.

The foundation of Foſtat by Amrou Ebn Elaas. *Deſcription of the town, its inhabitants, antiquities, and the ancient canal which extended to the Red-Sea; with a refutation of thoſe authors who ſuppoſe this place to be the ancient Babylon, found-by Semiramis.*

To Mr. L. M.

THE town of Foſtat, Sir, commonly called *Old Cairo*, has been the ſubject of great diſcuſſions amongſt the learned *(g)* who have written upon Egypt. The greateſt part of them having ſought for

(g) Mr. Maillet pretends that it was in the town of Foſtat that the governors of Egypt, for the emperors of Conſtantinople, reſided, when *Amrou*, ſon of *Elaas* took it after a long ſiege. *Deſcription de l'Egypte, tome premier, p.* 194.—It is a miſtake.

Mr. Shaw, who relates the opinion of the geographer of Nubia, ſays, "The town of Foſtat is preciſely the "ſame we call *Maſr*, a name taken from *Miſram*, ſon "of Cham, the ſon of Noah;—Peace be to whom;—"for it is he who was its firſt founder." *Obſerva-*

for its origin in Greek and Latin authors, have deceived themſelves. Had they opened the annals of oriental hiſtory, they would have diſcovered the truth they were in ſearch of, and their deſcriptions would have been free from a multitude of errors. I ſhall follow the plan I have traced out for myſelf, and inſtead of my opinion, ſhall lay the facts before you.

" *(b)* In the twentieth year of the Hegira, " *Amrou*, ſon of *Elaas*, built *Maſr Foſtat*, " on the ſpot where he had formed his " camp, previous to his going to beſiege " Alexandria. His tent remained in that " place, becauſe he would not deſtroy the " neſt of a pigeon, which had laid her " young there. The general on his return

tions geographiques ſur la Syrie, et l'Egypte, p. 24. à la note. This opinion is far from the truth.

Father Sicard, who quotes Flavius Joſephus, gives the following words: " Old Cairo was the ancient " Leté. Cambyſes ſettled the Babylonians in that town " who dwelt in Egypt after the conqueſt of Babylon." *Lettres Edifiantes*, page 473. Old Cairo was not founded in the time of Flavius Joſephus, as hiſtory aſſures us; but the fortreſs of Babylon, at near a league's diſtance from that town, was in exiſtence.

(b) Elmacin, hiſtory of the Arabs.

from

" from his conqueſts, laid the foundation " of a town there, to which he gave the " name of *Foſtat*, (which ſignifies *Tent*, in " Arabic)."

This paſſage points out with preciſion the foundation of *Foſtat*. The govefnors ſent by the Caliphs made it their place of reſidence. It took the ſurname of *Maſr (i)*, which Memphis had borne, before and which the Arabs always beſtow on the capital of Egypt. Its ſituation on the banks of the Nile, and near a canal that communicated with the Red-Sea, rendered it in a ſhort time very flouriſhing. It was about two leagues in circumference, when *Schaouar*, five hundred years after its foundation *(k)*, delivered it up to the flames, to prevent it from falling under the dominion of the French. Its power terminated with this epocha. With its inhabitants, it loſt its commerce and its riches. It was then that

(i) The Arabs pretend that *Miſram*, the ſon of *Cham*, ſettled in Egypt. They call that country therefore *Maſr*, and give the ſame name to the town which becomes the capital.

(k) See the preceding letter.

Grand Cairo having become the reſidence of the grandees, and the kings of the country, received the pompous epithet of *Maſr*, and that *Foſtat*, aſſumed that of *Elatik*, which ſignifies *the ancient*, which it bears at this day *(l)*.

The learned *Abulfeda*, adds ſome circumſtances to the deſcription of *Elmacin*, which throw a great light on hiſtory. " *Amrou* ſon of *Elaas*, after conquering " Egypt, laid the foundation of Foſtat un- " der the caliphate of *Omar*. Near the

(l) Never have the oriental hiſtorians given Foſtat the name of *Cahera*, (Cairo). They firſt call it *Foſtat*, then *Foſtat Maſr*, and ſince its decline, *Maſr Elatik*. It was the Venetian merchants who called it *Old Cairo*, and travellers have repeated this improper denomination.

" Oua Foſtat mediné mahedta benaha amrou ebn " elaas, lamma fatah diar masr fi khalafet Omar. " Oua can fi mauda el Foſtat Caſr men bena elaouail " ïecal lo caſr elchamah, ſe can Foſtat amrou be janeb " el jamèh elmarouf bejamèh Omar be maſr. Oua " lam tezel maſr, oua hié Foſtat courch lelmemleké " eddiar elmaſriat hetta taula ahmed ebn Toulon. " Oua bena lo oua l'aſquero elcataïah fi chemali maſr. " Oua bena and *elcataïah* djamèh elmarouf be djamèh " Tailoun." *Abulfeda, deſcription of Egypt*, p. 33.

" ſite

" ſite on which he built it, was a caſtle " of an ancient conſtruction, called the *Caſtle* " *of the Lights*. The moſque of Omar, " built at a little diſtance from the ſpot " where the general had pitched his tent, " was encloſed within the walls of the " town. *Foſtat Maſr* was the ſeat of the " Egyptian empire until the time of *Ebn* " *Toulon*, who built to the northward of " its walls the ſuburb of *Cataïah*. He retired " thither with his army, and founded the cele- " brated temple *(m)* which bears his name."

The encloſure of the caſtle, Abulfeda ſpeaks of, is ſtill exiſting; it is an oblong ſquare, ſurrounded by thick walls, the antiquity of which ſtrikes the eye; it is ſituated to the eaſt of Foſtat, on the decline of Mount Mokattam; ſome Chriſtians inhabit the ruins, and the Greeks and Coptis have churches there. Several ancient arches ſtill exiſting, in the ſpace between it and the river, others half deſtroyed, and a building of a hexagonal

(m) I have ſpoken of this temple in the preceding letter; it is one of the handſomeſt moſques in Grand Cairo.

form

form, raiſed on the banks of the Nile, announce the ruins of the aqueduct which ſupplied it with water. This, Sir, is the Fortreſs of *Babylon*, the ſubject of numberleſs reſearches and errors of the learned. Is was founded by the Perſians when they ravaged Egypt under Cambyſes, or as other writers will have it, when Semiramis viſited this country, at the head of a formidable army *(n)*. Strabo has deſcribed it ſo as not to be miſtaken. The Perſians, worſhippers of the ſun, kept up a perpetual fire in it, which gave riſe to the name beſtowed on it by the Arabs of *the Caſtle of the Lights (o)*.

Maſr

(n) In mounting the Nile above Heliopolis (the modern Matarée, ſituated at two leagues from Grand Cairo) is the caſtle of Babylon, fortified by art and nature. It was built by ſome Babylonians who withdrew thither by the permiſſion of the ſovereign. The Romans keep in garriſon there one of the three legions ſtationed in Egypt. From that fortreſs the mountain has a gentle ſlope to the bank of the Nile. One hundred and fifty ſlaves are continually employed there in raiſing the water, by means of wheels and an aqueduct. *Strabo*, lib. 17.

(o) Mr. Nieburh has given a figure of this oblong ſquare in his plan of Cairo, but he took it for a ci-

Maſr el Atik is not half a league in circumference; but it is ſtill very populous, and has a good deal of trade. It is the harbour for the boats which come from Upper Egypt; and it is from thence they take their departure to remount into the Saïd *(p)*. The Copti are very numerous there, and have ſeveral churches. The moſt conſiderable is that of St. Macaire, where their patriarch is inſtalled. Within the church of Saint Sergius is a grotto, held in great veneration by the Chriſtians. They pretend that the holy family, flying from the perſecution of Herod, took refuge in this place. I ſaw the hiſtory of that flight painted on the gate of a niche where maſs is ſaid. The oriental dreſs is perfectly obſerved in this picture, and the head of the virgin is tolerably well painted. The truth of the *coſtume*, too much neglected by modern painters, often deſtroys the effect of their moſt beautiful compoſitions.

a citadel, which he ſuppoſes, without any reaſon, to have been built by the Arabs.

(p) The Arabs call Upper Egypt *Saïd*, which commences above Maſr Foſtat, and terminates near to *Aſſouan*, formerly *Sienna*.

At

At the entrance of Old Cairo, is an hexagonal building, each ſide of which is eighty feet, and one hundred high. A range of ſteps, very eaſy of aſcent permits the oxen to mount it, where they turn a wheel which raiſes the water to the top. Five baſons receive, and pour it into an aqueduct, ſupported by three hundred arches, which conveys it into a reſervoir. From thence, other oxen raiſe it by the means of freſh wheels, up to the palace of the Pacha. This building is the work of the Arabs. They have formed it on the plan of that deſcribed by Strabo, the ruins of which are between the citadel of Babylon and the Nile. All the difference is, that the Mahometans make uſe of oxen, inſtead of men.

The environs of *Maſr Elatik* are covered with ruins which mark its ancient extent, and which, in default of hiſtorical monuments, would ſufficiently atteſt that it is a modern town. They have not in fact that character of majeſty with which the Egyptians impreſſed their edifices, and which time itſelf has been unable to efface. Amongſt theſe heaps of rubbiſh we diſcover neither ſphinx, column, nor obeliſk.

Within

Within the town, thick walls ſurround a large place, where the corn of the Thebais is depoſited, that is deſtined for the ſubſiſtence of the troops. This encloſure is called Joſeph's Granary. This name has impoſed on ſome travellers, who, without examining, have taken it for the work of the ſon of Jacob; but this monument has no appearance of antiquity, and hiſtory informs us that it was built by the Mameluk ſovereigns. It is at Memphis, the reſidence of the Pharaohs, that Joſeph, overſeer of the corn of Egypt, eſtabliſhed his magazines.

At the extremity of *Maſr Elatik*, near the water caſtle, begins the *Khalig (q)* which traverſes Grand Cairo, and is opened every year with great ſolemnity. Almoſt all the modern writers have attributed its conſtruction to the emperor Trajan *(r)*, founded

(q) The Arabs call by the name of *khalig* all the canals formed by the hand of man.

(r) Mr. Shaw calls it the canal of Trajan. *Obſervations geographiques ſur la Syrie et ſur l'Egypte*, p. 27.

Mr. Pocock ſays; "Oppoſite to the reſervoir of "water which is on the Nile, is the canal that con-

"veys

founded on this paſſage of Ptolemy, *between Heliopolis and Babylon, runs the river Trajan*; but that Emperor cut no canal in Egypt; it is to his ſucceſſor who built the town of Antinoé, that a work of this kind muſt be aſcribed. The canal meant by Ptolemy, begins at a league and a half below Old Cairo, and paſſes near Heliopolis; it is that which *Macrizi (s)* names with reaſon *the Khalig of Adrian Cæſar*.

The origin of the canal whoſe opening is before *Maſr Elatik*, is too well deſcribed by *Elmacin*, to ſuffer thoſe who conſult oriental hiſtory to confound it with that of Adrian. Amrou having announced the taking of Alexandria to Omar, and ſent ſome camels laden with corn to Medina, then laid waſte by famine, the Caliph congratulated him on his ſucceſſes, adding

" veys it to Cairo, which appears to me the ſame that " Trajan formed." *Deſcription de l'Egypte, tome premier.*

Father Sicard, going beyond the reſt, ſays; " It is " the canal that Ptolemy calls *Amnis Trajanus*, Quin- " tus Curtius, *Oxius*, and the Arabs, *Merakemi*." *Lettres edifiantes*, p. 470.

(s) Macrizi, hiſtoire de l'Egypte.

theſe

theſe words, " *(t)* Cut a *Khalig*, by which " the produce of Egypt may be tranſport- " ed into the ſea of *Colzoum*, *(u)*, and from " thence to the port of Medina. Amrou " executed this grand project, and dug the " *Khalig*, which was called *the River of the* " *Prince of the Faithful (x)*. Boats going " from Foſtat, conveyed the articles of " Egypt into the Red Sea."

Such, Sir, is the origin of this famous canal, which travellers, copying from one another, call the *Amnis Trajanus*. It takes its riſe near Foſtat, traverſes the whole length of Grand Cairo, fills the lakes of that city, and loſes itſelf four leagues beyond it, in the *Birque (y)* of the pilgrims of Mecca. The different princes who ſucceſſively have occupied the throne of Egypt, ſeveral of whom were enemies of the Caliphs, have ſuffered it to be choked up.

(t) Elmacin, hiſtoire des Arabes.

(u) Colzoum, is the Arabic name for the Red Sea. which is taken from the little town of *Colzoum*, whoſe ruins are at ſome diſtance from Suez.

(x) Khalig el emir el moumenin.

(y) Birque is an Arabic word, which ſignifies a large piece of water.

It no longer conveys its waters to the Red Sea; but as it is cut through a rock for the ſpace of twenty-four leagues, the mud and ſand with which it is filled might eaſily be removed. By opening this important communication with the Red Sea, Grand Cairo would again become the richeſt and moſt commercial capital in the world.

I hope, Sir, that your love of truth will pardon me theſe diſcuſſions, as they ſerve to illuſtrate ſeveral points of hiſtory, hitherto hidden in profound darkneſs. I ſhall ſoon have the opportunity of preſenting you with more pleaſing pictures. The country I inhabit is another world, which daily affords new ſcenes. I ſhall endeavour faithfully to paint them; you ſhall hear the Turks converſe; you ſhall ſee them act; and I will leave you the higheſt gratification of an enlightened mind, the pleaſure of judging for yourſelf.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Extent of Grand Cairo. Deſcription of the ſtreets, ſquares, and moſques, and of the palace of Salah Eddin, *built upon an eminence which commands the town; and where are to be ſeen ſuperb columns of granite, with the famous well of Joſeph.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

GRAND Cairo, Sir, is built along the canal of *the Prince of the Faithful*, and is a league and a half from north to ſouth, and three-quarters of a league from eaſt to weſt. To diſcover its extent, one muſt mount up to the caſtle built by *Salah Eddin*, on mount *Mokattam (z)*, which

(z) *Mokattam* ſignifies cut. This rock is ſo called from being ſeparated by art from the mountain, which beginning at the cataracts, terminates at this place. It is only about a hundred paces diſtant from it.

commands the town that forms an immenſe creſcent around it. In the midſt of that multitude of houſes which appear heaped together in the ſpace of three leagues, it is impoſſible to follow the direction of the ſtreets, which are narrow and crooked. One can only diſtinguiſh here and there large vacancies, which become lakes during the encreaſe of the Nile, and are gardens the reſt of the year. In the month of September they are paſſable in boats; in April they are covered with flowers and with verdure. Amongſt the numerous temples with which this city is filled, ſome of them riſe up like citadels. Such is the moſque of Sultan Haſſan, into which the rebels withdrew in the time of ſedition, and from the top of which they battered the caſtle with cannon. This large edifice, the groteſque ſculpture of whoſe cornice projects conſiderably, is covered with a vaſt dome. The façade is encruſted with precious marbles. At preſent the gates are walled up, and a guard of janiſſaries defends the approach to it.

Within

Within the walls of Grand Cairo, are upwards of three hundred moſques, the greateſt part of which have ſeveral minarets. They are very high ſteeples, of a very light architecture, and ſurrounded with galleries. They give an agreeable variety to the city, otherwiſe too uniform, from the univerſal flatneſs of the roofs, which are all in the form of terraces. It is from theſe minarets that the public criers call the people to prayers at the hours preſcribed by the law *(a)*. About eight hundred voices are to be heard at the ſame inſtant in every quarter of the town, reminding the people of their duty towards the Deity. The ſound of bells is odious to the Turks. They pretend that it hurts the ears, that it does not addreſs itſelf to the heart, and that it is only made for beaſts of burthen. This opinion they derive from Mahomet. That great politician, wiſhing every thing to have an object in his religion, that it might

(a) That is to ſay, at ſun-riſe, at noon, at three o'clock, at ſun-ſet, and about two hours after. Theſe prayers are named *Salaas el fegr, el dohr, el aſr, el magreb, el âché.*

captivate, at once, the mind and the ſenſes, rejected the trumpet, made uſe of by the Jews, and the rattle of the oriental chriſtians. He thought that the human voice would make more impreſſion upon man than the noiſy ſound of inſenſible braſs, and procured from heaven a formula *(b)* favourable to his deſigns.

The caſtle of Cairo, placed on a ſteep rock, ſurrounded by thick walls, ſupported by large towers, was very ſtrong before the invention of gunpowder. But as it is commanded by the neighbouring mountain, it would not ſuſtain the fire of a battery from thence, two hours. It is more than a quarter of a league in circumference. There are two very ſteep ways up to it, cut out of the rock, which lead to two gates, en-

(b) The following is the formula: God is great. I declare that there is only one God. I aver that Mahomet is his prophet. Come to prayer; come to adoration. God is great. He is the only one.

Allah Acbar. Echhed en la ila ella allah echhed en Mahammed raçoul allah, haï ala es ſalat. Haï ala el ſalah. Allah Achbar. La ila ella allah.

truſted

truſted to the guard of Aſſabs *(c)* and Janiſſaries. The former occupy the lower part of the fortreſs, and the others, what is properly called the citadel. It is from thence, that with ſix wretched pieces of cannon turned againſt the apartment of the Pacha, they force him to retire as ſoon as the Beys have given him the order.

The interior of the caſtle contains the palace of the Sultans of Egypt, almoſt buried under their ruins. Domes overthrown, heaps of rubbiſh; gilding and painting, whoſe colours have braved the injury of time; ſuperb columns of marble ſtill ſtanding, but almoſt all without capitals; theſe are all that remain of their ancient magnificence. It is in one of the halls of theſe ruined buildings, that the rich carpeting is fabricated, which the *Emir Hagg (d)*

(c) The Aſſabs and the Janiſſaries are corps of troops maintained by the Grand Seignior, but are ſold to the grandees of the country.

(d) The Bey who is employed to eſcort the caravan that ſets out every year for Mecca, takes the name of *Emir Hagg*, prince of the caravan.

carries every year to Mecca. The old one is carried off by the pilgrims, who tear away pieces to make relics of them, and the new one ſerves to cover the *Caaba*, or temple of Abraham *(e)*.

The Pacha reſides in a large building which has nothing remarkable, and whoſe windows look upon the place called *Cara Maïdan*. The audience hall where the divan is held three times a week, is as long, but not ſo wide as that of the *Palais* at Paris, (not ſo large as the Guildhall of London.) It is ſtained with the blood of the Beys, maſſacred in the courſe of a few years, by order of the Porte. At this day they are in fact the ſovereigns of Egypt. The repreſentative of the Grand Seignior is only a vain phantom that they ſport with. They keep him to anſwer their purpoſes, and ſend him off diſgracefully, whenever their intereſt requires it. Kept a priſoner in his own palace, he cannot ſtir out of it without their permiſſion. To ſuch a point of humiliation is the dignity of the Ottoman

(e) See *L'Abrégé de la Vie de Mahomet*, p. 4.

ſovereign

ſovereign degraded! To ſuch a degree of weakneſs is that empire reduced, which threatened to give chains to Europe!

At the extremity of *Cora maïdan* is the mint, where they coin a prodigious quantity of medins and ſequins, *(f)* which are ſtruck with the die of the *Cheik Elbeled (g)*. I have ſeveral times viſited theſe works. The ſequins are made of the gold-duſt brought by the caravan of Abyſſinia. The intendant of the mint aſſured me that it furniſhed them annually with upwards of four millions.

One of the moſt curious monuments to be admired in the caſtle, is the well of Joſeph *(h)*, hewn out of the rock. It is

(f) The ſequin is a piece of gold worth about ſeven livres, ten ſols, or ſix ſhillings and three-pence Engliſh.

(g) The moſt powerful of the Beys of Grand Cairo takes the name of *Cheik Elbeled*, Governor of the country, and aſſumes the right of coining money.

(h) Mr. Pocock ſays, that a Viſir called Joſeph ſunk this well about 700 years ago, by order of Sultan *Mahommed*, ſon of *Calaoun*. The Egyptians aſſert, that it was the work of *Salah Eddin*. It is certainly, however, a work of the Arabs, and not of the Babylonians, as Father Sicard pretends.

two hundred and eighty feet deep, by forty-two in circumference. It conſiſts of two different excavations, which are not perpendicular one to the other. A ſtair-caſe, whoſe deſcent is very gentle, winds round it. The partition which ſeparates it from the well, is formed out of the rock, and is only ſix inches thick. Some windows made in it at ſtated intervals, light this flight of ſtairs; but as they are ſmall, and the light comes from a great diſtance, it is neceſſary to have candles to conduct you. When you arrive at the foot of the firſt perpendicular, there is an eſplanade with a baſon. It is there that oxen turn the wheel which raiſes the water from the bottom of the lower well. Other oxen placed above, raiſe it from this reſervoir by the ſame mechaniſm. This water comes from the Nile, and, as it filters through a ſand impregnated with ſalt and nitre, it is brackiſh.

In the quarter of the Janiſſaries are the ruins of the palace of Salah Eddin. One there

there ſees the divan of Joſeph *(i)*, the dome of which, and part of the walls, are fallen. There are ſtill ſtanding thirty columns of red granite, the ſhafts of which of ſingle ſtones are more that forty-five feet high. The difference of their ſize, and of the ſculptured ornaments around their capitals, announce that they have been brought from ancient monuments. At ſome diſtance from theſe beautiful pillars, is a charming belvedere. It is a ſaloon ſituated in the higheſt part of the citadel, from whence the view extends over an immenſe horizon. One ſees the whole extent of Grand Cairo, a multitude of moſques and minarets, and on the ſide of Boulac a rich country covered with harveſts, and interſperſed with groves of date-trees. Maſr Foſtat appears to the ſouth-weſt, and the plains of the Saïd, which, when they are overflowed by the Nile, offer to the

(i) Salah Eddin was called *Joſeph* ſon of *Aioub*. His other names are ſo many high titles given him by the Mahometans, on account of his victories over the Chriſtian princes, whom he expelled Syria.

view

view here and there different hamlets, built on eminences, now converted into iſlands. This landſcape is terminated by the pyramids, which, like the tops of mountains, loſe themſelves in the clouds. One is never tired of running ones eye over ſo many variegated and commanding objects. I have more than once enjoyed this delightful ſpectacle. The freſh air one breathes in this lofty ſituation, the coolneſs one enjoys there, adds a new charm to the pleaſures of the ſight. Seated on this delightful belvidere, the mind gives itſelf up to agreeable meditations, which are ſoon interrupted by thoſe of a more gloomy nature. One ſays to ones ſelf, theſe rich countries, where flouriſhed formerly the arts and ſciences, are occupied by an ignorant and barbarous people, who trample them under foot. Deſpotiſm cruſhes with his iron ſceptre the moſt beautiful portion of the globe; it ſeems as if the miſery of the human race increaſed in proportion to the efforts which nature has made to render them happy. It was

but

but yeſterday that theſe ſentiments penetrated my very ſoul, whilſt walking on the eſplanade of the caſtle, I meditated on the magnificent picture which preſented itſelf to the eye.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER IX.

Deſcription of Boulac, the port of Grand Cairo, its magazines, environs, and the gardens of Hellé; *with a curious account of the Mekias, otherwiſe named the Nilometer, placed at the point of the beautiful iſle of Raouda, which is covered with enchanted groves.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

YOU have ſeen, more than once, Sir, the word *Boulak* in my letters. It is the port where all the merchandize is landed which comes from Damietta and Alexandria. It is only half a league's diſtance from Grand Cairo. This modern town is ſituated on the weſtern bank of the Nile, and is two miles long, but not very wide. It contains magnificent public baths, and vaſt *okals*; theſe are ſquare buildings, around a great court with a portico, which ſupports

ſupports a winding gallery. The ground floor is compoſed of ſpacious warehouſes, the next floor contains apartments without furniture, and without ornament. Theſe *okals* are inhabited by ſtrangers, who there depoſite their merchandize. One ſingle gate like that of the citadel, ſecures them from inſult at the time of the revolts. Theſe kans are the only inns to be met with in Egypt. The traveller is obliged to furniſh them, and dreſs his victuals there, for in this country a dinner is not to be had for money.

From all the houſes in Boulak one ſees thouſands of boats at anchor, of every ſhape and every ſize. Some of them that are ſtrong and ſolid have two maſts, and are employed in tranſporting merchandize. Theſe uſually have a large chamber for the paſſengers. Others, lighter and without deck, only ſerve to convey the people from one ſhore to the other. Thoſe which are made uſe of in voyages of pleaſure are adorned with painting and with ſculpture, and have handſome apartments covered with carpeting, where one is ſheltered from the

the ſun. It is in them that the rich go to breathe that coolneſs which is inceſſantly ſupplied by the current of air that reigns upon the Nile. It is from them that one admires at one's eaſe that variety of landſcapes which diverſify its ever verdant banks. When the wind is favourable, the ſail is ſpread, and theſe light veſſels ſeem to fly upon the water. When it is contrary, a ſet of robuſt boatmen row them with great rapidity. Cleopatra, who knew the charms of theſe parties on the water, engaged Cæſar in one of them, and carried him even into Upper Egypt. She had the art to make the moſt active, and the greateſt of all the Roman generals, forget that the capital of the world might poſſibly ſhut her gates againſt him.

Oppoſite to *Boulak* appears the ſmall village of *Enbabé*. It is compoſed of miſerable round huts of earth under the ſycamore trees, by which they are propped. Some few houſes of brick hardened in the ſun, and a ſmall moſque, loſe themſelves at a diſtance, amongſt the foliage of date and tamarind-trees. The inhabitants of Cairo

purchaſe

purchaſe excellent butter there in the winter, and in the ſummer delicious melons.

Half a league to the north-eaſt of *Boulak*, is the old caſtle of *Hellé (i)*, which is falling into ruins. It is there that the Beys, attended with brilliant retinues, go to receive the new Pacha, to conduct him in pomp to the priſon from whence they have juſt driven his predeceſſor. In the environs of Hellé are ſpacious encloſures, where orange, lemon, and pomegranate-trees, grow very high and very buſhy. Their interwoven branches form delightful bowers, over which the ſycamores and palms elevate their foliage of a deeper green, whilſt rivulets purl through tufts of *(k)* ſweet baſil and of roſes. I cannot expreſs to you how grateful it is, when the ſky is inflamed with the burning heat of the dog-days, to breathe the freſh air under theſe en-

(i) It appears probable that this caſtle has taken its name from Heliopolis, from which it is not diſtant.

(k) The baſilic, or ſweet baſil, in Egypt grows to three times the height it does in France, and forms agreeable and odoriferous tufts.

chanted

chanted ſhades. It is a voluptuouſneſs, more eaſily felt than deſcribed. The fragrance of the orange-flower, mixed with the delicious emanations from balſamic plants, ſweetly awaken the ſenſes, benumbed with the heat, and circulate through the ſoul the moſt agreeable ſenſations. It is often dangerous for an European to walk in theſe groves, which are peopled with courtezans; and the jealous Turks would never pardon them a falſe ſtep. One may with propriety apply to theſe Barbarians this verſe of Virgil:

Ignoſcenda quidem, ſcirent ſi ignoſcere manes.

Beyond theſe gardens is the canal which Macriſi ſays was conſtructed by the Emperor Adrian, and which Ptolemy calls *the river Trajan*; it is almoſt choked up.

After viſiting theſe delicious ſpots, I returned to embark at *Boulak*, and went up the Nile as far as the iſle of Raouda *(l)*,

(l) Raouda ſignifies *gardens*, from whence the iſland takes its name, as it contains charming ones.

ſituated

ſituated between Old Cairo and *Gizé*. In the ſpace of one league, the eye runs over immenſe fields of corn, flax, and beans, interſperſed with clumps of date-trees, and with hamlets over the whole extent of the proſpect. Before I arrived at Gizé, I ſaw on the left bank of the river the mouth of a large canal *(m)*.

Arriving at the point of the iſle of *Raouda*, I went to ſee the Nilometer, called by the Arabs *Mekias (n)*. It is a lofty pillar of marble in the middle of a baſon, the bottom of which is on a level with the bed of the Nile. It is graduated through its whole length, and divided into cubits, and inches. A corinthian capital, on which reſts a beam that ſupports a gallery, crowns this column. When the inundation commences, the waters enter the baſon by a conduit; the

(m) I have ſeveral times gone along its banks, and followed its courſe for the ſpace of a league. It deſcribes ſeveral windings in the plains, and runs in the direction of Lybia. It appears to me to have been one of thoſe which formerly conveyed their waters to Lake Mareotis.

(n) Mekias ſignifies *meaſure*.

public criers then examine the pillar every morning, and publiſh the daily increaſe of the river in all the ſtreets of Cairo. When it reaches ſixteen cubits, the dyke which cloſes the canal of the *Prince of the Faithful*, is cut with great ceremony; and the Nile flows acroſs the town amidſt the acclamations of the whole people. I will deſcribe this feaſt to you in a particular letter.

Before the Arabs made the conqueſt of Egypt, the Nilometer was placed in the town of *Halouan*, five leagues to the ſouthward of Foſtat, oppoſite to the ancient (o) Memphis. "In the year 92 of the "Hegira, Ocama, governor of this rich "country, wrote to the emperor Soliman *Abd* "*elmelek*, that the Mekias of *Halouan* (p), "was overturned. The caliph command-"ed him to erect another in the iſland "between Foſtat and Giſé. He was obey-

(o) Elmacin, hiſtory of the Arabs.

(p) It was natural to place the Nilometer near to Memphis, which, at the time of the conqueſt of the Arabs, was the reſidence of the governors of Egypt. It is not improbable there was one on each ſide of the river.

"ed.

"ed. One hundred and forty years after, "this Nilometer fell, and the emperor "*Elmetouakkel* built another in the ſame "place." It was called the *New Mekias*.

This Nilometer is now exiſting. *Nejm Eddin*, ſon of *Melek el Adel*, who died at *Manſoura*, during the expedition of Saint Louis into Egypt, charmed with the beauty of this ſituation, built a vaſt palace near the *Mekias*, and quitted the caſtle of *Salah Eddin* to inhabit it. The ſlaves who were employed to guard it, were called *Babarites*, or maritime, and diſtinguiſhed themſelves at the battle of Manſoura. At preſent the apartments of the palace are in a ſtate of decay, and the walls are falling into ruins; but the baſon, which is of ſolid work, and the column ſtrongly ſupported, do not appear, in the ſpace of nine hundred years, to have ſuffered from the outrages of time.

If *Murtadi (q)* may be credited, the Nile failed in its increaſe at the uſual ſeaſon, the year that Amrou conquered

(q) Deſcription of the wonders of Egypt.

Egypt. The heads of the people addreſſed themſelves to that conqueror, praying him to permit them, agreeable to the ancient cuſtom, to deck out a young virgin in rich garments, and to throw her into the river. This the Mahometan general ſtrongly oppoſed. The Nile did not ſwell during the three months after the ſummer ſolſtice. The Egyptians alarmed, again renewed their ſolicitations. He wrote to Omar, and gave him an account of this event. The Caliph anſwered him:——

"O! Amrou! I approve your conduct, and "the firmneſs you have diſplayed. The "Mahometan law ought to aboliſh theſe "barbarous cuſtoms. When you have "read this letter, throw into the river the "billet it contains."—Amrou found in it theſe words:

"*In the name of the merciful and gracious* "*God!* may the Lord ſhower his benedic-"tions on Mahomet and on his family! "*Abd allah Omar*, ſon of *Khettab*, prince "of the faithful, to the Nile:——If it be "thine own virtue which hath made thee "overflow Egypt until our days, ſuſpend

"thy

" thy courſe; but if it be by the will of " the Almighty God that thou bedeweſt " it with thy waters, we ſupplicate him to " order thee ſtill to diffuſe them over it.— " Peace be with the prophet! health and " benedictions repoſe upon his family!

" As ſoon, continues the hiſtorian as this " billet was thrown into the river, the wa- " ter roſe ſeveral cubits."

Notwithſtanding Omar, to whom the burning of 400,000 volumes coſt no more than a momentary heſitation, was very capable of writing ſuch a letter; and although it is evidently his ſtyle, I am far from warranting its authenticity, on the faith of *Murtadi*; ſtill leſs the miracle that followed it. A cuſtom however ſtill ſubſiſting at this day, ſeems to me to prove that the Egyptians formerly ſacrificed a young virgin to the God of the Nile; for they now make a ſtatue of earth in the ſhape of a girl, to which they give the name of *The betrothed Bride*, upon the dyke of the *Khalig of the Prince of the Faithful*, which they throw into the river previous to the opening of

the canal. Are not theſe the remains of that barbarous worſhip, which the Ottomans, in ſpite of their horror for every ſpecies of idolatry, have not been able totally to aboliſh, an account of its being an ancient error of a ſuperſtitious people?

After viſiting the *Mekias*, and the remains of the palace of Nejm Eddin, I made an excurſion through the iſland, which is only a vaſt garden ſurrounded by the waters of the Nile. Its banks are defended by thick walls, breaſt-high, from the impetuoſity of the current. On one ſide is Old Cairo, the water-caſtle, and the country-houſes of the Beys. On the other, one ſees the handſome little town of Giſé, where there is a manufacture of ſal ammoniac. The governor who reſides there has aſſumed to himſelf a claim on the curioſity of thoſe who go to viſit the pyramids. I was inſenſibly advancing under a wood of orange, tamarind, and ſycamore-trees, and was enjoying an agreeable coolneſs under their thick ſhade. Seldom did a few ſcattered rays of the ſun penetrate this gloom with a glimmering

mering of light, and gild a ſmall part of the foliage. The air was embalmed with exhalations from the flowers and plants. A multitude of turtle doves were flying from one tree to another, without any ſymptoms of fear at my approach. The ſoul, abandoned to the ſweeteſt reveries, the ſenſes abſorbed in the moſt flattering ſenſations, I penetrated incautiouſly into the inmoſt receſſes of the thicket, when of a ſudden I heard a dreadful voice cry out; "Where "goeſt thou? If thou ſtirreſt another ſtep, "thou art a dead man." It was a ſlave who watched at the entrance of the wood, to prevent any raſh intruders from troubling the women who were repoſing on the graſs. I immediately drew back, and was very fortunate not to have been known for an European. I have ſince underſtood that the Beys ſometimes come with their *Harem (r)* into this iſle, and that a ſtran-

(r) This is the name given to the apartment of the women, but it is made uſe of in the country to ſignify the women themſelves.

ger who might be led thither by curioſity on theſe occaſions, would run the riſk of having his head taken off on the ſpot. You ſee, Sir, how circumſpect it is neceſſary to be in a country where death may prove the conſequence of the ſlighteſt indiſcretion.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER X.

Deſcription of Heliopolis, the ancient city of the Sun; of the ſtate in which it was in the time of Strabo; the obeliſk of granite, which ſtill remains; the balm of Mecca, tranſplanted thither by a Pacha; the freſh water fountain named Matar Aïn, *held in great veneration by the Copti, who believe that the holy virgin and her child viſited this place.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

IN deſcribing the environs of this city, I muſt not overlook, Sir, the ancient Heliopolis *(s)*, formerly renowned for the cultivation of the higher branches of ſciences, and for the grandeur of its buildings. Geographers place it at ſome diſtance from the eaſtern

(s) That is to ſay *the city of the Sun.*

point

point of the Delta. Strabo *(t)* tells us that it was built on a long mound of earth, made by the hands of man, to place it out of the reach of the inundation. This cauſeway, covered with rubbiſh, is ſtill viſible two leagues to the north-eaſt of Grand Cairo, and three from the ſeparation of the Nile.

Heliopolis had a temple to the ſun, where a particular place was ſet apart for the feeding of the ſacred ox, which was there adored under the name of *Mnevis*, as he was at Memphis, under that of *Apis*. The credulous people looked upon him as a God, whilſt the prieſt ſaw nothing in him but an animal of infinite uſe in agriculture, in a country where he ſerves for tillage, and for the *(u)* ſix following months of the year, to water the earth;

(t) Book 17.

(u) During the whole time that the Nile is low, the oxen are employed in turning draw-wheels, to raiſe the water into ciſterns, from whence it is circulated through the grounds. For this reaſon they never deſtroy this animal at its birth. It is prohibited to kill a calf in Egypt.

but

but as this ſuperſtition was advantageous to them, by procuring offerings, and rendering them maſters of the oracles, they made uſe of every art to maintain it.

The temple of the Sun was not the only one which was admired at Heliopolis. There was another remarkable one in the ancient Egyptian taſte *(x)*, with avenues of ſphinxes, and ſuperb obeliſks before the principal entry. Nothing could be more awful than thoſe coloſſuſes of marble, and thoſe lofty needles of one ſingle ſtone, which were placed before the veſtibule of the temples. Whilſt the aſtoniſhed eye contemplated theſe wonderful works, the mind diſcovered in the hieroglyphics with which they were covered, the hiſtory of the God who was the object of adoration, and of the prince who had erected theſe monuments. The temples of Heliopolis were already fallen into decay, under the reign of Auguſtus. Strabo relates that one every where ſaw, ſtrongly imprinted, the marks of the fury of Cambyſes, who had

(x) Strabo, lib. 17.

laid

laid this city waſte with fire and ſword. Of the four obeliſks built by *Sochis* in that town, two were removed to Rome *(y)*. another has been deſtroyed by the Arabs, and the laſt of them is ſtill ſtanding on its pedeſtal. It is compoſed of a block of Thebaic ſtone perfectly well poliſhed, and is 68 feet high, without reckoning its baſe, and about 6 feet and a half wide on each aſpect. They are covered with hieroglyphics. This obeliſk is in good preſervation, except on the ſouth-weſt ſide, where the granite is ſcaled off, up to a certain elevation. This beautiful monument, and a ſphinx of a yellowiſh marble, overſet in the mud, are the only remains of Heliopolis.

This city had alſo a college of prieſts which the barbarity of Cambyſes ſpared no more than the aſylum of *Mnevis*. It was from thence that for upwards of one thouſand years they obſerved the ſtate of the heavens, and that by dint of labour they had ſucceeded in compoſing the ſolar

(y) Strabo, lib. 17.

year

year of three hundred and ſixty-five days, and a few minutes. This fact alone proves the extent of their aſtronomical knowledge. For ſeveral ages after, the people of Europe were unable accurately to determine the ſolar year, and Julius Cæſar, who wiſhed to reform the Roman calendar, to effect his purpoſe, was obliged to make uſe of an aſtronomer of Alexandria.

It was chiefly at Heliopolis that Herodotus became acquainted with the ſciences, and the Egyptian myſteries. Theſe were in fact no other than a ſuperior degree of knowledge, which their prudence concealed from the people, by covering them with the veil of religion, and by writing them in hieroglyphical characters, of which the prieſthood excluſively poſſeſſed the interpretation. Enlightened by the information he had drawn from them, and gifted with the genius of obſervation, this father of hiſtory was crowned at the Olympic games, and the nine books he had compoſed, merited the diſtinction of being named after the nine Muſes. How many perſons are there, notwithſtanding, who not having deeply examined his

his works, or who not having even read them, preſume to explode or accuſe them of infidelity? As for myſelf, ſuſpending my judgment of the reſt of his hiſtory, I can only eſtimate that part of it which treats of Egypt, and it is with the greateſt ſatisfaction I have found, in that country, the very manners and cuſtoms he has deſcribed, with only a few ſlight modifications introduced by the changes of government and religion. With reſpect to the monuments, of which he has given us a deſcription, what ſtill remains of them ſufficiently proves that he has not exaggerated, and demonſtrates the poſſibility of what no longer exiſts. I am impelled by juſtice to make this aknowledgment to a hiſtorian, who, like Homer, is the painter of nations.

Heliopolis has not only the glory of having inſtructed Herodotus; ſhe may ſtill further boaſt of having taught philoſophy to Plato *(z)*, who merited the name of Divine from the ſublimity of his doctrine. It was in this city alſo that Eudoxus

(z) Strabo, lib. 17.

paſſed

paſſed thirteen years at the ſchool of the prieſts, and became one of the moſt celebrated aſtronomers of his time. What now remains to her of all her ſciences, of all her monuments? A Perſian barbarian overthrew her temples; a fanatic Arab burnt her books; and one ſolitary obeliſk raiſed on its ruins, ſays to the paſſengers,—*Here ſtood Heliopolis.*

One ſees at ſome diſtance from the bank on which it was built, the little village of Matarée *(a)*, ſo named from its having a ſpring of freſh water, the only one exiſting in Egypt. It is probable that the bed of earth, through which the water of the Nile filtrates into this fountain, is deſtitute of the nitre univerſally found in this country. It is rendered famous by an ancient tradition, which ſays that the holy family, flying from the perſecution of Herod, retired to this ſpot; and that the holy virgin bathed the infant Jeſus in this fountain; the Chriſtians of courſe relate many mira-

(a) The Arabs call it *Matareé* or *Ain chams*, fountain of the Sun, on account of its ſituation near the ancient Heliopolis.

cles

cles which have been performed there. They come with great devotion to drink this water for all their diſorders. The Mahometans themſelves partake of their veneration on this ſubject.

In this village was an encloſure where a Pacha had planted ſome ſlips of balm from Mecca. They were cultivated with care, and by cutting them like vines, produced thoſe precious tears known in medicine, and which the women in the eaſtern world make uſe of with advantage, to preſerve the freſhneſs of their complexion, and to fortify the ſtomach. Theſe ſhrubs, a foot and a half high, ſhoot out ſmall branches and leaves like thoſe of rue. Belon, who ſaw them when he was at Cairo, counted nine of them. He dried one of the branches, and aſcertained it to be the plant known by the name of *xyllobalſaſamum*, brought by the caravans from Mecca. He ſays that its reddiſh bark covers a ſkin of a beautiful green. It has a mixed ſavour of frankincenſe of the leaf of turpentine, and of wild ſavory. When rubbed between the fingers, it diffuſes

diffuſes an aromatic odour, approaching that of cardamum. This precious plant is loſt in Egypt, where the Pachas remain too ſhort a time to employ themſelves about any thing but their own intereſt. It no longer exiſted when Mr. Maillet was Conſul at Grand Cairo. At this day it is ſcarcely in remembrance.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XI.

Deſcription of the warm baths, univerſally uſed in Egypt; the manner of bathing; the benefits experienced from this practice; the cuſtom of the women, of bathing once or twice in the week; and a compariſon of theſe baths, with thoſe of the ancient Greeks.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE hot-baths, Sir, known from the moſt remote antiquity, and celebrated by Homer, the painter of the manners of the age he lived in, have preſerved their pleaſure and ſalubrity in Egypt. The neceſſity of cleanlineſs, in a climate where one perſpires ſo copiouſly, has rendered them indiſpenſable; the comfort they produce, preſerves the uſe of them; and Mahomet, who knew their utility, has reduced it to a precept. Travellers in general

general have deſcribed them ſuperficially. My habit of frequenting them, having afforded me leiſure to examine them with attention, I ſhall enter into all the particulars neceſſary to give you a thorough knowledge of them *(b)*.

The firſt apartment one finds in going to the bath, is a large hall, which riſes in the form of a rotunda. It is open at the top, to give a free circulation to the air. A ſpacious eſtrade, or raiſed floor, covered with a carpet, and divided into compartments, goes around it, on which one lays ones clothes. In the middle of the building a jet-d'eau ſpouts up from a baſon, and agreeably entertains the eye.

When you are undreſſed you tie a napkin round your loins, take a pair of ſandals, and enter into a narrow paſſage, where you begin to be ſenſible of the heat. The door ſhuts to, and, at twenty paces off,

(b) I know the baths of the principal towns in Egypt; they are all built on the ſame plan, differing only in their ſize; ſo that by giving the deſcription of one of them, the reader will have that of all the others.

you open a ſecond, and go along a paſſage, which forms a right angle with the former. Here the heat increaſes. They who are afraid of ſuddenly expoſing themſelves to a ſtronger degree of it, ſtop in a marble hall, in the way to the bath, properly ſo called. The bath is a ſpacious and vaulted apartment, paved and lined with marble, around which there are four cloſets. The vapour inceſſantly riſing from a fountain and ciſtern of hot water, mixes itſelf with the burning perfumes *(c)*.

The bathers are not impriſoned here, as in France, in a ſort of tub, where one is never at ones eaſe. Extended on a cloth ſpread out, the head ſupported by a ſmall cuſhion, they ſtretch themſelves freely in every poſture, whilſt they are wrapped up in a cloud of odoriferous vapours, which penetrates into all their pores.

After repoſing there ſome time, until there is a gentle moiſture over the whole

(c) Perfumes are never burnt, except the perſons who are in the bath deſire it. They mix with the ſteam of the water, and produce a moſt agreeable effect.

body,

body, a ſervant comes, preſſes you gently, turns you over, and when the limbs are become ſupple and flexible, he makes all the joints crack without any difficulty. He maſſes *(d)*, and ſeems to knead the fleſh, without making you feel the ſmalleſt pain.

This operation finiſhed, he puts on a ſtuff glove, and rubs you a long time. During this operation, he detaches from the body of the patient, which is running with ſweat, a ſort of ſmall ſcales, and removes even the imperceptible dirt that ſtops the pores. The ſkin becomes ſoft and ſmooth like ſatin. He then conducts you into a cloſet, pours the lather of perfumed ſoap upon your head, and withdraws. The ancients did more honour to their gueſts, and treated them in a more voluptuous manner. Whilſt Telemachus was at the court of Neſtor *(e)*, "the beau-" tiful Polycaſta, the handſomeſt of the

(d) Maſs comes from the Arabic verb *maſs*, which ſignifies touching in a delicate manner.

(e) Odyſſey, book 3d.

" daughters of the king of Pylos, led " the ſon of Ulyſſes to the bath, waſhed " him with her own hands, and, after " anointing his body with precious oils, " covered him with rich habits, and " a ſplendid cloke." Piſiſtratus and Telemachus were not worſe treated in the palace of Menelaus *(f)*. " When they " had admired its beauties, they were con- " ducted to baſons of marble, where a bath " was prepared. Beautiful female ſlaves " waſhed them, and after anointing them " with oil, covered them with rich tunicks, " and ſuperb pelices *(g)*."

The cloſet to which one is conducted is furniſhed with a ciſtern and two cocks, one for cold and the other for hot water.

(f) Odyſſey, book 4th.

(g) I have tranſlated the words χλαίνας οὐλας hairy cloaks, by *ſuperb pelices*. I am aware that no other tranſlator has done the ſame; but it appeared to me that the poet wiſhed to deſcribe a cuſtom ſtill exiſting in the eaſt, of covering themſelves with pelices in coming out of the hot-baths, to prevent the perſpiration from being checked at a time when the pores are extremely open.

There

There you waſh yourſelf. Soon after the ſervant returns with a depilatory pomatum *(b)*, which in an inſtant makes the hair fall off the places it is applied to. Both men and women make general uſe of it in Egypt.

After being well waſhed and purified, you are wrapped up in hot linen, and follow the guide through the windings that lead to the outer apartment. This inſenſible tranſition from heat to cold prevents one from ſuffering any inconvenience from it *(i)*. On arriving at the eſtrade, you find a bed prepared for you, and ſcarcely are you laid down, before a child comes to preſs every part of your body with his

(b) It is compoſed of a mineral called *ruſma*, which is of a deep brown. The Egyptians burn it lightly, knead it with water, mixing it with half the quantity of ſlaked lime. This greyiſh paſte applied to the hair, makes it fall off in two or three minutes, without giving the ſlighteſt pain.

(i) Delicate perſons ſtop ſome time in the hall next the ſtove, to avoid inconvenience from going ſuddenly into the exte,nal air. As the pores are very open, one keeps ones ſelf warm the whole day; and if in winter, one ſtays in the houſe.

delicate fingers, in order to dry you thoroughly. You change linen a ſecond time, and the child gently grates the calloſity of your feet with pumice ſtone. He then brings you a pipe and Moka coffee *(k)*.

Coming out of a ſtove, where one was ſurrounded by a hot and moiſt fog, where the ſweat guſhed from every limb, and tranſported into a ſpacious apartment, open to the external air, the breaſt dilates, and one breaths with voluptuouſneſs. Perfectly *maſſed*, and, as it were regenerated, one experiences an univerſal comfort. The blood circulates with freedom, and one feels as if diſengaged from an enormous weight, together with a ſuppleneſs and lightneſs, to which one has been hitherto a ſtranger. A lively ſentiment of exiſtence diffuſes itſelf to the very extremities of the

(k) One of theſe baths, with all the preparations, coſt me three livres, (half a crown). The common people do not take ſo much trouble about them: they only go to ſweat in the ſtove, waſh themſelves, and give three or four ſols, (a penny or two-pence) at coming out.

body.

body. Whilſt it is loſt in delicate ſenſations, the ſoul, ſympathiſing with the delight, enjoys the moſt agreeable ideas. The imagination, wandering over the univerſe, which it embelliſhes, ſees on every ſide the moſt enchanting pictures, every where the image of happineſs. If life be nothing but the ſucceſſion of our ideas, the rapidity with which they then recur to the memory, the vigour with which the mind runs over the extended chain of them, would induce a belief that in the two hours of that delicious calm that ſucceeds the bath, one has lived a number of years.

Such, Sir, are the baths, the uſe of which were ſo ſtrongly recommended by the ancients, and which are ſtill the delight of the Egyptians. It is by means of them that they prevent or diſpel rheumatiſms, catarrhs, and ſuch cutaneous diſorders as are produced by want of perſpiration. Hence likewiſe they find a radical cure for that fatal evil which attacks the ſources of generation, the remedy for which is ſo dangerous in Europe.

rope *(l)*. By the ſame reſource, they get rid of that uncomfortable feeling, ſo common to all nations, who do not pay ſo much attention to the cleanlineſs of their bodies.

The women are paſſionately fond of theſe baths. They frequent them at leaſt once a week, and take with them ſlaves properly qualified for the purpoſe. More ſenſual than the men, after undergoing the uſual preparations, they waſh their bodies, and above all, their heads, with roſe-water. It is there that female head-dreſſers form their long black hair into treſſes, which they mix with precious eſſences, inſtead of powder and pomatum. It is there that they blacken the edge of their eyelids, and lengthen their eyebrows with *cobel (m)*. It is there

(l) Mr. Tournefort, who had uſed ſteam-baths at Conſtantinople, where there is leſs refinement in them than at Cairo, is of opinion that they injure the breaſt. This is an error which further experience would have corrected. There are no people who make more frequent uſe of them than the Egyptians, and there is no country where there are fewer aſthmatic people. The aſthma is ſcarcely known there.

(m) Cobel is a preparation of tin burnt with gall-nuts,

there they ſtain the finger and toe nails with *henné*, which gives them a golden colour *(n)*. The linen and clothing they make uſe of are paſſed through the ſweet ſteam of the wood of aloes. When the work of the toilet is at an end, they remain in the outer apartment, and paſs the day in entertainments. Females entertain them with voluptuous ſongs and dances, or tell them love tales.

The days of uſing the bath, are feſtivals for the Egyptian women. They deck themſelves out magnificently, and under the long veil and cloak that conceal them from the public eye they wear the richeſt ſtuffs. As they undreſs before each other, their coquetry extends even to their drawers. In ſummer they are made of embroidered muſlin; in winter of ſtuffs, of ſilk and gold brocade. They are not acquainted with the uſe of ruffles and laces, but their

nuts, which the Turkiſh women make uſe of to blacken, and lengthen their eye-brows.

(n) Henne is a very common ſhrub in Egypt; it has ſome reſemblance to privet. The leaf cut ſmall, and applied to the ſkin, gives it a golden colour.

ſhifts,

ſhifts, made of ſilk and cotton, are as light and tranſparent as gauze. Their flowing robes are bound with rich girdles of the wool of Cachemire *(o)*. Two creſcents of fine pearls ſparkle on the black hair that covers their temples. The Indian handkerchiefs with which they crown their heads, are decorated with diamonds. Such are the Georgian and Circaſſian women, whom the Turks purchaſe to make wives of them. Nothing can equal their cleanlineſs, and, as they walk, they are ſurrounded by a cloud of odours. If their luxury be not publicly diſplayed, it greatly ſurpaſſes that of the European women, in the interiour of their houſes.

The Turks, governed by an exceſſive jealouſy, pretend, that in a hot country, where nature is ſo powerfully felt, where

(o) The wool of Cachemire is the moſt beautiful in the world. It ſurpaſſes even ſilk in fineneſs. The girdles that are made of it, coſt about 600 livres, or 25 *l.* ſterling. They are uſually embroidered at the ends, and although they are an ell wide and three long, one can paſs them through a ring for the finger.

the

the women are hurried on to pleaſure by an irreſiſtible impulſe, the communication would be dangerous between the two ſexes; they abuſe their power, therefore, by keeping them in ſlavery; but by this means they only add to the violence of their deſires, and they ſeize accordingly the firſt opportunity to revenge themſelves. The Turks are ignorant, no doubt, that if women left to their liberty are attainable, in a ſtate of ſlavery, they will make the firſt advances to the men.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XII.

A particular account of the Egyptian manner of living, the food, occupations, and amuſements of the people; their taſte, morals, and the manner in which they receive viſitors.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

LIFE, Sir, is more a paſſive than an active exiſtence at Grand Cairo (*p*). The body during nine months of the year is oppreſſed with the exceſſive heats. The mind partakes of this ſtate of indolence. Far from being continually tormented by the deſire of ſeeing, of acquiring knowledge, and of acting, it ſighs after calm and tranquillity. Under a temperate ſky

(*p*) From the month of March to November the height of the thermometer is conſtantly from twenty-three to thirty-ſix degrees. In the other months it is ſeldom lower than nine degrees above the freezing point.

inactivity

inactivity is a pain; here, on the contrary, repoſe is an enjoyment. The moſt frequent ſalutation therefore, that which is made uſe of on accoſting, and repeated on quitting you, is, *(q) Peace be with you!* Effeminacy is born with the Egyptian, grows up with him as he advances in life, and follows him to the tomb. It is a vice of the climate. It influences his taſte, and governs all his actions. It is to ſatisfy this diſpoſition that the moſt luxurious piece of furniture in his apartment is the ſopha; that his gardens have delightful ſhades, convenient ſeats, and not a ſingle alley one can walk in. The Frenchman, born in a climate, the temperature of which is continually changing, receives every inſtant new impreſſions which keep his ſoul awake. He is active, impatient, and inconſtant as the air he breathes in. The Egyptian who for two-thirds of the year almoſt invaria-

(q) This is the ſalutation of the Orientals. The chriſtian religion, which is of Aſiatic origin, has preſerved it. At the high feſtivals, the prieſts ſalute each other during the communion, ſaying, *Peace be with you!*

bly

bly experiences the ſame degree of heat, the ſame ſenſation, is ſlothful, ſerious and patient.

He riſes with the ſun to enjoy the coolneſs of the morning. He purifies himſelf, and goes to prayer according to the precept *(r)*. He is preſented with a pipe and coffee. He remains ſoftly repoſing on his ſopha. His ſlaves, with their hands croſſed on their beaſts, ſtand in ſilence at the bottom of the apartment. Their eyes fixed on their maſter, they ſtrive to anticipate all his wiſhes. His children ſtanding in his preſence, unleſs he gives them permiſſion to be ſeated, diſplay in all their behaviour the utmoſt tenderneſs and reſpect. He gravely careſſes them, gives them his bleſſing, and ſends them back to the *harem (s)*. He alone interrogates, and is anſwered with

(r) O! ye Believers, before you begin the prayer, waſh your face and hands up to your elbows. Wipe your head and feet down to your heels. Coran, p. 107. tome premier, *of Mr. Savory's tranſlation.*

(s) Harem is an Arabic word, ſignifying *forbidden place*; it is the apartment of the women, called by us improperly the Seraglio.

decency.

decency. He is at once the chief, the judge, and the pontiff of the family, which reſpects in him thoſe ſacred rights.

After breakfaſt he applies himſelf to his commercial affairs, or to thoſe of the place he occupies. As to differences, they are very rare amongſt a people where the monſter of chicanery is dumb, where the name of attorney is unknown, where the code of laws is confined to a few clear, and well defined precepts of the Coran, and where every man is his own advocate.

If any viſitors arrive, the maſter of the houſe receives them without many compliments, but in an affectionate manner. His equals go and ſeat themſelves by him with their legs croſſed; a poſture by no means fatiguing with clothes which do not fetter the limbs.

His inferiors are on their knees, and ſeated on their heels. Perſons of great diſtinction ſit on an elevated ſopha, from which they overlook the company *(t)*. Thus Æneas

(t) Inde toro pater Æneas ſic orſus ab alto. Æneid, lib. 2. The epithet of *father*, given by Virgil to Æneas,

Æneas was in the place of honour in the palace of Dido, when ſeated on a high bed, he related to the queen the diſaſtrous fate of Troy, reduced to aſhes. As ſoon as every one is ſeated, the ſlaves bring pipes and coffee, and place in the middle of the chamber a pan with perfumes, the delicious vapour of which fills the whole apartment. They are next preſented with ſweetmeats and ſorbet.

The tobacco made uſe of in Egypt comes from Syria. It is brought in leaves, which are cut in long filaments. It has not the pungency of the American tobacco. To render it more agreeable, it is mixed with the ſcented wood of aloes. The pipes, uſually made of jeſſamine tipped with amber, are frequently enriched with precious ſtones. As they are extremely long,

proves that this great poet was perfectly acquainted with eaſtern manners, with whom the name of father is the moſt reſpectable title one can confer on any man. They ſtill think it an honour to be ſo called. On the birth of a ſon they quit their proper name for the appellation of *father of ſuch a one.*

the

(u) the ſmoke one inhales is very mild. The Orientals pretend that it tickles agreeably the palate, at the ſame time that it gratifies the ſmell. The rich ſmoke in lofty apartments with a great number of windows.

Towards the concluſion of the viſit, a ſlave holding in his hand a ſilver plate on which are burning precious eſſences, approaches the faces of the viſitors, each of whom in his turn perfumes his beard. They then pour roſe-water on the head and hands. This is the laſt ceremony, after which it is uſual to withdraw.

You ſee, Sir, that the ancient cuſtom of (x) perfuming one's head and beard, celebrated by the royal prophet, ſtill ſubſiſts in our days. Anacreon, the father of joy, the poet of the graces, never ceaſes repeating in his odes, "(y) I like to perfume

(u) One ſees pipes fifteen feet long. The general ſtandard is five or ſix.

(x) Sicut unguentum optimum in capite, quod deſcendit in barbam Aaron. *Pſalm* 132.

(y) *Anacreon*, ode 15.

" myſelf with precious eſſences, and to " crown my head with roſes."

About noon the table is covered. A large flat plate of copper tinned receives the diſhes. No great variety is diſplayed, but there is an abundance of proviſions. In the middle riſes up a mountain of rice boiled with poultry, ſeaſoned with ſaffron and a quantity of ſpices. Round it are placed haſhed meats, pigeons, ſtuffed cucumbers, delicious melons, and other fruits. Their roaſt meat conſiſts of fleſh cut into ſmall morſels, covered with the fat of the animal, ſeaſoned with ſalt, ſpitted and roaſted on the coals. It is tender and juicy. The gueſts are ſeated on a carpet round the table. A ſlave holding a baſon and ewer, offers it to waſh with. This ceremony is indiſpenſable in a country, where every one puts his hand into the plate, and where they are unacquainted with the uſe of forks. This is repeated at the end of the repaſt. Theſe cuſtoms appear very ancient in the Eaſt.

Menelaus and the beautiful Helen, after loading Telemachus and Piſiſtratus with preſents, gave them the banquet of hoſpitality.

tality *(z)*. "The fair Menelaus conduct-
"ed his gueſts to the place of entertain-
"ment. He made them be ſeated on
"thrones. A female ſlave, carrying in her
"hands a golden ewer with a ſilver baſon,
"offers them to waſh. She places before
"them a poliſhed table, on which ſhe ar-
"ranges the victuals."

The manner in which the ſon of Thetis received the Grecian deputies very much reſembles that of the Egyptians towards their gueſts.

"*(a)* Achilles perceiving the deputies
"of the Greeks, riſes up, takes them by
"the hand, gives them the ſalute. . . . and
"introduces them into his tent, where he
"makes them be ſeated on beds of re-
"poſe *(b)*, covered with purple tapeſtry.
". . . . The banquet is prepared. Auto-
"medon holds the fleſh, the noble Achil-
"les divides it into pieces, and ſpits them.
"Menetius, a mortal like unto a God,

(z) Odyſſey, book 4.

(a) Iliad, book 9.

(b) The ſophas of the Orientals ſerve them alternately as ſeats and as beds.

" lights the fire, ſpreads out the coals, ar-
" ranges the ſpits upon the cinders, and
" ſtrews over them the ſacred ſalt.....
" Achilles, ſeated oppoſite to the divine
" Ulyſſes, ſhares out the victuals.....
" The gueſts put their hands to the meat
" *(c)* that is ſerved up to them." A poet of an inferior genius to Homer would have thought he diſhonoured a poem filled with magnificent deſcriptions by mixing ſuch details with them. Yet, how precious are they, by making us acquainted with the ſimplicity of ancient manners, a ſimplicity loſt to Europe, but which is ſtill exiſting in the eaſtern world.

After dinner, the Egyptians retire into their harams, where they ſlumber a few hours in the midſt of their children and their women. It is a great article of voluptuouſneſs with them, to have a convenient, and agreeable place of repoſe. Mahomet, accordingly, who neglected nothing that could ſeduce mankind, whoſe wants and taſtes he knew thoroughly, ſays

(c) They took the victuals doubtleſs with their fingers, as is practiſed at this day in ſome countries.

to

to them, *(d)* "The guests of Paradise "shall enjoy the luxury of repose, and "shall have a delicious place to sleep in at "noon."

The poor, who have neither sopha nor haram, lie down on the mat where they have dined. Thus, when Jesus Christ took the supper with his disciples *(e)*, he whom he loved had his head reposed upon his bosom.

In the evening one goes in a boat upon the water, or to breathe the cool air on the banks of the Nile, under the shade of orange and sycamore trees. Supper-time is an hour after sunset. The tables are spread with rice, poultry, vegetables, and fruit. These aliments are wholesome during the heats. The stomach, which would reject more substantial nourishment, has occasion for them. They eat little. Temperance is a virtue of this climate.

Such is the usual life of the Egyptians. Our places of amusement, our noisy plea-

(d) Coran, ch. 25, p. 119.

(e) Erat ergo recumbens unus ex discipulis ejus in sinu Jesu quem diligebat Jesus. *St. John, ch.* 13, *v.* 23.

ſures, are unknown to them. That ſameneſs which would be the greateſt puniſhment to an European, appears to them delicious. They paſs their whole life in doing the ſame thing, in following the eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, without deſiring any thing beyond them, without extending their ideas any further. Having neither lively appetites, nor ardent deſires, they are ſtrangers to what we call *l'ennui*; that is a torment reſerved for ſuch perſons as neither being able to moderate their paſſions, nor to ſatisfy the extent of their taſtes, are a burthen to themſelves *s'ennuient* whereever they are, and only live where they are *not*.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

An account of the paternal authority ſtill ſubſiſting in Egypt, ſimilar to that of the ancient patriarchs; the manner in which a father governs his children; and the great reſpect which the Egyptians pay to old age.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

IT is in the Eaſt, Sir, that hiſtory places the cradle of the human race. It is there that paternal authority took its riſe, which is ſtill preſerved there in its full force. A father there enjoys all the titles that nature has beſtowed on him. Chief, judge, and high prieſt of his family, he commands there, he is the arbiter of all their differences, and ſacrifices the victims of the *Courban beiram* (*f*).

Each

(*f*) The *Courban beiram* is a Mahometan feſtival, where each father of a family muſt offer a ſacrifice proportioned to his ability. The rich ſlay oxen and ſheep;

Each family forms a ſmall ſtate, of which the father is the ſovereign. The members who compoſe it are attached to him by the ties of blood. They acknowledge his power, and ſubmit to it. The differences which ariſe amongſt them are brought before his tribunal; he pronounces, and his decrees terminate the diſpute, and reſtore order and tranquillity. The moſt aged of the old men holds the ſceptre in his hands, and he is enabled to direct it from the reſult of a long experience. But in every thing reſpecting the interior adminiſtration, he is guided by the law of ancient cuſtoms.

ſheep; the poor fulfil the precept by killing a pigeon. This ſolemn feaſt amongſt the Mahometans is ſix weeks after the Ramadan, and recalls to mind the Jewiſh paſſover.

Mahomet, unable to aboliſh the ſacrifice of animals, authorized by heaven in the eaſtern world, recommends to them the chapter of the pilgrimage of Mecca; but to ſanctify the uſe of it, corrupted by idolatry, he enjoins them to invoke the name of God on the animal they ſlaughter, adding theſe remarkable words; *God receives neither the fleſh nor the blood of victims, but the piety that makes the offering is welcome to him.* Coran, *p.* 93, *tome* 2.

The

The children, brought up in the apartments of the women, do not enter the hall, particularly when there are ſtrangers. When the young people appear, they obſerve a profound ſilence. Grown up to manhood, they may mix in the converſation; but when the *Cheik (g)* ſpeaks, they hold their tongue, and liſten attentively. Every one riſes up when he appears in company. The precedence is given him in all public places, and he is every where treated with conſideration and reſpect. This cuſtom ſubſiſted in Egypt in the time of Herodotus *(h)*; and the deſpotiſm that cruſhes the country contributes ſtill to preſerve it. Under a yoke of iron, who dares lift up his head? It would be a crime to make a diſplay of riches to the public eye. Every thing is carefully avoided that may

(g) This word ſignifies old man, the eldeſt of the family aſſumes this reſpected name. It is beſtowed alſo on the men of the law.

(h) Like the Lacedemonians, who alone of all the Greeks paid true homage to old age, the Egyptians give the precedency to thoſe who are older than themſelves, and riſe from their ſeats when they appear. *Herodotus. Euterpe.*

ſerve

ſerve to awaken the avarice of the ruling tyrants. It it even dangerous to appear happy. It is only within one's own family therefore, that tranquillity and happineſs are to be found. As the ſafety of the ſociety depends on the union of its members, the common intereſt, joined to the voice of conſanguinity, preſerves its harmony. It is there, accordingly, that the holy laws of nature are obſerved in their primitive purity. A numerous poſterity are frequently lodged under the ſame roof. Every day the children and grand-children come to pay their progenitor the tribute of tenderneſs and veneration. The pleaſure of being more loved and reſpected as he advances in years, makes him forget that he grows old. The joy and contentment of his heart gliſten in his eyes. The wrinkles of his brow are ſmoothed by ſerenity. He is joyous and condeſcending; and whilſt the young people wear nothing but the plaineſt dreſſes *(i)*, he is decked out in

(i) In Egypt, the ſplendid colours are reſerved for the old men; the youth whoſe morals are corrupted, alone dare clothe themſelves in brilliant dreſſes.

the

the moſt brilliant colours. Happy in the boſom of his family until on the very verge of the grave, he does not perceive that death is about giving him the fatal blow, and falls aſleep amidſt the embraces of his children. They long weep over him, and go every week to ſtrew flowers over his tomb *(k)*, and to repeat funeral hymns. The Egyptians have loſt the cuſtom of embalming the bodies, but have preſerved the ſentiments that gave it birth.

Amongſt poliſhed people, who live leſs in the domeſtic ſtyle, old age is not ſo reſpected; it is not unfrequently even a reproach. Old age with its hoary locks is often obliged to be ſilent before preſumptuous youth, and ſport like a child to be ſupportable in company. In proportion as he feels the weight of years come upon him, and the pleaſures of his exiſtence diminiſh, he ſees that he becomes a burthen to thoſe whom he has brought into the world. When he has the greateſt

(k) It is a cuſtom in Egypt to cover the tomb of their kindred with fragrant plants, and to repeat prayers there.

need

need of conſolation, they refuſe him their reſpect, and every heart is ſhut againſt him. His ſoul, chilled by age, falls into decay, without the comfort of filial love to warm him with its generous flame. It is in the midſt of poliſhed nations that the venerable old man, who was a tender father, dies, long before he drops into the grave.

Let us draw the veil over a picture which happily is not general. The affecting ſcenes to which I have daily been a witneſs in this country, extort from me this parallel. Here the reſpectable patriarch, whoſe venerable white beard falls down upon his breaſt, ſmiles, under the froſt of old age, on his grand-children who come to careſs him. His heart expands at the ſight of four generations, eager to pay him the tribute of filial piety. He reliſhes the charm of life even to his laſt moment. Yes, Sir, this people in their ſtate of ignorance, have preſerved the ſimplicity of ancient manners. They know nothing of our arts and ſciences; but the forcible ſentiments of nature, (ſentiments which books can never teach); with thoſe

they

they are intimately acquainted, they revere and enjoy them.

I could ſupport what I advance by a thouſand inſtances. I ſhall only ſelect one well known anecdote. When Mr. Maillet was conſul at Grand Cairo *(l)*, the Jeſuits prevailed on the court of France to ſend for ſome children of the Copti *(m)*, to Paris, to educate them in the College of Louis le Grand. They were to be inſtructed in the orthodox faith, and to be ſent back to convert their ſchiſmatic nation. By dint of money and promiſes, the conſent of ſome fathers, extremely poor, was obtained; but when the moment of ſeparation from their children arrived, paternal tenderneſs revived in all its force, and they preferred returning to a ſtate of poverty, rather than purchaſe a comfortable ſituation, by a ſacrifice which coſt their heart too dear.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(l) About one hundred years ago.

(m), The Copti are the ancient inhabitants of Egypt. They are Jacobite Chriſtians. I ſhall ſpeak of them more amply in the courſe of theſe letters.

LETTER XIV.

An account of the Almé, *otherwiſe the Egyptian* Improviſatrices; *their education, dances, muſic; and the extreme deſire which prevails through the cou try, of procuring this kind of performers.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

EGYPT, Sir, as well as Italy, has her *Improviſatori.* They are called *Almé,* knowing they have merited this name, from having received a better education than other women. They form a celebrated ſociety in this country. To be received into it, it is neceſſary to have a good voice, to underſtand the language well, to know the rules of poetry *(n)*, and be able

(n) The Arabic have the ſame quantity as the Latin verſes, with the varied meaſure, and rhyme of the French poetry. Theſe advantages are not to be found in a language the proſody of which is not diſtinctly marked.

to

to compoſe and ſing couplets on the ſpot, adapted to the circumſtances. The *Almé* know by heart all the new ſongs. Their memory is furniſhed with the moſt beautiful *moals (o)*, and the prettieſt tales. There is no feſtival without them; no entertainment of which they do not conſti-

(o) The *moals* are elegiac hymns, where the death of a hero is bewailed, or the misfortunes incident to love. Abulfeda has preſerved the end of a *moal*, ſung by *Ommia* on the ſide of a trench into which her nephews had been thrown after the defeat of Beder:

"Have I not ſufficiently wept over the noble ſons "of the princes of Mecca?

"At the ſight of their broken bones, like to a tur- "tle concealed in the depth of the foreſt, I have filled "the air with my lamentations.

"Unfortunate mothers! your foreheads bowed down "to the earth, mix your ſighs with my tears.

"And ye, ye women who follow the proceſſions, "chaunt your funeral hymns interrupted with long "ſighs.

"To what have the princes of the people, the chief "men of the tribes been reduced at Beder?

"The old and the young warriors are laid there "naked, and without life.

"How Mecca hath changed her appearance!

"Theſe deſolated plains, theſe ſavage deſarts them- "ſelves ſeem to ſhare my ſorrow." *Life of Mahomet*, "(by the author) p. 83.

tute the ornament. They are placed in a roſtrum from whence they ſing during the repaſt. They then deſcend into the ſaloon, and form dances which have no reſemblance to ours. They are pantomime ballets, in which they repreſent the uſual occurrences of life. The myſteries of love too, generally furniſh them with ſcenes. The ſuppleneſs of their bodies is inconceivable. One is aſtoniſhed at the mobility of their features, to which they give at pleaſure the impreſſion ſuited to the characters they play. The indecency of their attitudes is often carried to exceſs. Their looks, their geſtures, every thing ſpeaks, but in ſo expreſſive a manner, that it is impoſſible to miſtake them. At the beginning of the dance, they lay aſide with their veils the modeſty of their ſex. A long robe of very thin ſilk goes down to their heels, which is ſlightly faſtened with a rich girdle. Long black hair, plaited and perfumed, is flowing on their ſhoulders. A ſhift, tranſparent as gauze, ſcarcely hides their boſom. As they put themſelves in motion, the ſhapes, the contours of their

bodies

bodies ſeem to develope themſelves ſucceſſively. Their ſteps are regulated by the ſound of the flute, of caſtanets, the tambour de baſque, and cymbals, which accelerates or retards the meaſure. They are ſtill further animated by words adapted to ſuch ſcenes. They appear in a ſtate of intoxication. They are the *Bacchants* in a delirium. It is when they are at this point, that throwing off all reſerve, they abandon themſelves totally to the diſorder of their ſenſes; it is then that a people far from delicate, and who like nothing hidden, redouble their applauſes. Theſe *Almé* are ſent for into all the *harams*. They teach the women the new airs; they amuſe them with amorous tales, and recite in their preſence poems, which are ſo much the more intereſting, as they furniſh a lively picture of their manners. They initiate them into the myſteries of their art, and teach them to contrive laſcivious dances. Theſe girls, who have a cultivated underſtanding, are very agreeable in converſation. They ſpeak their language with purity. The habit of dedicating themſelves

to poetry renders the ſofteſt and moſt ſonorous expreſſions familiar to them. They repeat with a great deal of grace. In ſinging, nature is their only guide. I have heard them ſing gay airs, the time of which was quick and light like that of ſome of our *ariettes*; but it is in the pathetic that they diſplay their talents. It is when they recite a *moal*, from the movement of the romance, that the continuity of tender, affecting, and plaintive ſounds, inſpires a ſecret melancholy, which inſenſibly increaſes, and changes into tears of commiſeration. The Turks themſelves, the Turks, enemies of all the arts, paſs whole nights in hearing them. Sometimes two of them ſing together, but always with the ſame voice. It is the ſame with an orcheſtra, where all the inſtruments playing in uniſon, execute the ſame part. Accompanyments are only made for enlightened people, who, at the ſame time that the melody flatters their ear, wiſh to have their mind occupied by the juſtneſs and perfection of the harmony. Thoſe nations, on the contrary, whoſe ſenſibility is more affected than their

hearing,

hearing, little capable of enjoying the charms of harmony, like only the ſimple tones whoſe beauty goes directly to the ſoul, without requiring reflection to perceive it.

The Hebrews, to whom the taſtes of the Egyptians had become natural, from a long reſidence in Egypt, had alſo their *Almé*. It appears that they gave leſſons to the women, at Jeruſalem, as well as at Grand Cairo *(p)*. St. Mark has preſerved a fact which proves what an empire the oriental dance had over the minds of men. " He-

(p) Et cùm dies opportunus adeſſet, Herodes in natalitiis ſuus cœnam faciebat proceribus ſuis, ac chiliarchis, primariis Galilææ.

Cùmque introiſſet filia ipſius Herodiàdis, et ſaltaſſet et placuiſſet Herodi ſimulque recumbentibus, rex ait puellæ : pete à me quodcunque volueris, et dabo tibi.

Et juravit illi quodcunque petieris dabo tibi, licet dimidium regni mei.

Quæ cùm exiſſet dixit matri ſuæ : quid petam ? at illa dixit : caput Johannis Baptiſtæ.

Cùmque introiſſet ſtatim cum feſtinatione ad regem, petivit dicens : Volo ut protinus des mihi in patina caput Johannis Baptiſtæ.

. . . . . Sed miſſo ſpeculatore precipit afferri caput ejus in patina, et decollavit eum in carcere.

Goſpel of St. Mark, chap. 6.

" rod celebrated his birth-day in the midſt
" of a ſumptuous banquet, where he had
" gathered together the chiefs of the na-
" tion, the tribunes, and the princes of
" Galilee. Whilſt the gueſts were at ta-
" ble, the daughter of Herodias entered,
" and danced before them after the man-
" ner of the country. The whole aſſem-
" bly applauded the graces ſhe diſplayed.
" The king, enchanted, vowed that he would
" grant her what ſhe ſhould demand, were
" it the half of his kingdom. Urged by
" her mother, the young Herodias de-
" manded the head of John the Baptiſt,
" and obtained it."

The *Almé* aſſiſt at the marriage ceremonies, and march before the bride, playing on inſtruments. They make a figure likewiſe at funerals, and accompany the proceſſion, ſinging ſorrowful airs. They break forth into groans, and lamentations, and give every ſign of grief and deſpair. Theſe women are paid very high, and ſeldom appear but amongſt the grandees and rich men.

I was

I was invited lately to a ſplendid ſupper, given by a rich Venetian merchant to the Receiver-general of the finances of Egypt. The Almé ſang ſeveral airs during the entertainment. They then celebrated the praiſes of the principal gueſts. The paſſage which appeared to me the moſt ſtriking was an ingenious allegory, wherein the meſſenger of love is made to ſpeak. After the entertainment there was play, and I perceived that handfuls of ſequins were ſent to the fingers from time to time. This entertainment produced them at leaſt fifty louis d'or. It is true they are not always ſo well paid.

The common people have alſo their *Almé*. They are girls of the ſecond claſs, who try to imitate the former, but they have neither their elegance, their graces, nor their knowledge. They are every where to be met with. The public places and the walks about Grand Cairo are full of them. As the populace require alluſions ſtill more ſtrongly marked, decency will not allow me to relate to what a pitch they carry the licentiouſneſs of their geſtures and

attitudes. It is impoſſible to form an idea of it, without having been a witneſs to theſe ſcenes. The *Bayadieres* of India are models of chaſtity compared to theſe Egyptian women dancers. You have here, Sir, the chief amuſement of the Egyptians. It conſtitutes their delight.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XV.

An account of the private life of the Egyptian women; their taſte, manners, employment, diverſions; their method of bringing up their children; with the cuſtom of lamenting at the tombs of their parents, after covering them with flowers, and the branches of odoriferous plants.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I Have given you ſome account, Sir, of the manner of living of the male inhabitants of this country, but I have ſpoken very little of the women. This *(g)* ori-

(g) The Egyptians never mention their wives in converſation. When they are obliged to ſpeak of them, they ſay the mother of ſuch a one, or the miſtreſs of the houſe, &c. Politeneſs prevents one from ſaying, How is madam your wife? It is neceſſary to imitate their reſerve, and ſay, How is the mother of ſuch a one? Even this they would look upon as an affront, were it not the ſalutation of an intimate friend or relation. I relate theſe traits, as perfectly characteriſtic of oriental jealouſy.

ental

ental reſerve cannot be agreeable to an European. I am now going to give you, therefore, a general idea of the manners of the Egyptian women.

The women act a brilliant part in Europe. They appear as ſovereigns on the theatre of the world. They preſide over manners, and decide on the moſt important events. The fate of nations is often in their hands. In Egypt, what difference! They are there only to be ſeen loaded with the chains of ſlavery. Condemned to ſervitude, they have not the ſmalleſt influence on public affairs. Their empire is limited to the walls of the Haram; for there are buried all their graces and their charms. Confined within the boſom of their family, the circle of their life does not extend beyond domeſtic employments *(r)*.

Their firſt duty is the education of their children. Their moſt ardent wiſh is to

(r) The compiler, *Pomponius Mela*, pretends that the women do all the out of door labour in Egypt, and the men take charge of the houſe, p. 59. This aſſertion is contradicted by every writer who has travelled in that country.

have

have a great number of them, ſince the public eſteem, as well as the tenderneſs of their huſbands are meaſured by their fecundity. Even the poor man who earns his bread with the ſweat of his brow, prays to heaven for a numerous progeny, and the barren woman would be inconſolable, did not adoption indemnify her in ſome degree for the injury of nature. Every mother ſuckles the child ſhe has brought into the world. The firſt ſmile of that tender creature, and an eaſy childbed, repay her for the pains and cares impoſed upon her by this duty.

The overflowings of the milk, therefore, and other diſorders, which drain the ſources of life of the young ſpouſe unobſervant of this law, are not known in this country. Mahomet has converted this cuſtom, which is coeval with the world, into a precept *(s)*. " Mothers ſhall ſuckle their children two " whole years, provided they are diſpoſed " to take the breaſt ſo long. The mother " ſhall be permitted to wean her nurſe-

(s) Coran, p. 40. t. 1. *Mr. S.'s tranſlation.*

" child

" child with the conſent of the huſband." Ulyſſes deſcending into the gloomy kingdom of Pluto *(t)*, ſaw there his mother, who had nouriſhed him with her milk, who had reared up his infancy.

When circumſtances compel them to have recourſe to a nurſe, ſhe is not looked upon as a ſtranger. She becomes part of the family, and paſſes the reſt of her life in the midſt of the children ſhe has ſuckled. She is honoured and cheriſhed like a ſecond mother.

Racine, who poſſeſſed all the knowledge neceſſary to diſplay the brilliancy of his genius; Racine, who, from his intimate acquaintance with the *chef-d'œuvres* of Greece, well knew the oriental manners, gives his *Phedra*, her nurſe, for her only confidante. The unhappy queen, burning with a guilty flame, ſhe could not conquer, and the fatal ſecret of which burthened her mind, without her daring to reveal it, did not reſolve to entruſt it to the

(t) Odyſſey, lib. 23. p. 375.

tender

tender Ænone until the latter addreſſed her:

Cruelle, quand ma foi vous a-t-elle déçue?
Songez-vous qu'en naiſſant mes bras vous ont reçue?

The Haram is the cradle and the ſchool of infancy. The helpleſs being, juſt brought into the world, is not infolded in wretched ſwaddling clothes, the ſource of a thouſand diſorders. Stretched out naked on a mat, expoſed to the air in a ſpacious apartment, he breathes without reſtraint, and moves his delicate limbs at pleaſure. His entrance into the new element wherein he muſt paſs his life, is not marked either by grief or tears. Bathed in water every day, reared up under his mother's eye, he grows rapidly. Free in all his movements, he tries his growing ſtrength; he is in conſtant action, he rolls about, he gets up, and if he happens to tumble, his falls cannot be dangerous on the carpet or mat *(v)* which covers the floor.

(v) In Egypt the rooms are paved with large flag ſtones, which are waſhed, at leaſt, once a week. In ſummer

floor. He is not baniſhed his father's houſe at ſeven or eight years old, to ſend him to a college, where he loſes his health and his innocence. It is true that he acquires little knowledge. His education is often limited to the art of reading and writing. But he enjoys a robuſt ſtate of health; whilſt the fear of the divinity, reſpect for old age, filial piety, the love of hoſpitality, virtues which every object preſents to him in the boſom of his own family, remain deeply graven on his heart.

The girls are brought up in the ſame manner. The whalebone, and the buſks to which the European women fall martyrs, are unknown to them. They are left naked, or only covered with a ſhift until they are ſix years old. The habit they wear the remainder of their lives does not fetter any of their limbs, and allows the whole body to aſſume its natural ſtructure. Nothing is ſo uncommon, therefore, as to ſee children full of hu-

ſummer they are covered with a cane mat, neatly worked, and in the winter with a carpet.

mours,

mours, or crooked perſons. It is in theſe eaſtern parts of the world that man riſes in all his native majeſty, and that woman diſplays all the charms of her ſex. It is in Georgia and in Greece that thoſe well-defined features, thoſe admirable forms, impreſſed by nature on the *chef-d'œuvre* of her works, are in the higheſt preſervation. It is there that Apelles would ſtill find models worthy of his pencil.

The women do not ſolely confine themſelves to the education of their children. All the domeſtic affairs are in their department. They are the houſe-keepers, and do not think it any diſparagement to prepare the victuals for themſelves and for their huſbands with their own hands. The ancient cuſtom which ſtill ſubſiſts makes it their duty. Thus we ſee Sarah haſtening to bake the cakes on the aſhes, when the angels viſited Abraham, who offered them the uſual repaſt of hoſpitality. Before the departure of Telemachus *(x)*, Menelaus ſays to him "I go

(x) Odyſſey, lib. 15.

"to

" to command the queen and her atten-
" dants to prepare a ſplendid repaſt with the
" proviſions that are contained in this pa-
" lace."

Subject to cuſtom, whoſe unalterable laws govern the countries of the Eaſt, the women are not admitted into the ſociety of the men, not even at table *(y)*, where the aſſemblage of the two ſexes produces gaiety and *bons mots*, and gives a zeſt to the entertainment. When the rich are deſirous of dining with one of their wives, they give her previous notice. She diſpoſes the apartment, prepares the moſt delicate diſhes, and receives her lord with reſpect, and with the moſt refined attention. The women of the lower claſs uſually remain ſtanding, or ſeated in a corner of the room, whilſt their huſband is at dinner. They frequently preſent him water to waſh himſelf, and help him at table *(z)*. Theſe cuſtoms

(y) Sarah, who prepared dinner for Abraham and his gueſts, did not ſeat herſelf at table; ſhe remained ſhut up in her tent.

(z) I dined lately with an Italian who was married to an Egyptian woman. He has adopted the manners

cuſtoms which the Europeans might juſtly ſtyle barbarous, and againſt which they might exclaim with reaſon, appear ſo natural in this country, that they have no idea of their being different in other climates. Such is the force of habit over the human mind. A cuſtom eſtabliſhed for ages ſeems to be the law of nature.

Domeſtic cares leave the Egyptian women a great many leiſure moments, which they employ amongſt their ſlaves in embroidering a ſaſh, in making a veil, in drawing deſigns on ſtuff to cover a ſopha, and in ſpinning with the diſtaff. So Homer paints the women of his time *(a)*. "Andromache, however, had not yet "learnt the death of Hector. She did "not know that he had remained without "the gates of the town. Occupied in "her palace, ſhe was embroidering a mag-

manners of the country he has lived in ſo long. His wife and ſiſter-in-law ſtood up before me; with difficulty I prevailed on them to be ſeated, and place themſelves at table with us. Their timidity and embarraſſment were very great.

(a) Iliad, lib. 22.

" nificent work, whilſt her ſlaves were heat-
" ing the bath for her huſband on his re-
" turn from battle."

Telemachus, ſeeing that Penelope, in ſpeaking to her ſuitors, talked of affairs which ſeemed to be out of her ſphere, ſays to her " O, mother! go up into your " apartment; reſume the occupations of " your ſex, the ſhuttle, and the diſtaff. " Command in the midſt of your women, " but leave to the men, and above all to " me, the care of this bow. Penelope " withdrew, ſecretly admiring the wiſdom " of her ſon *(b)*."

Labour, however, has its interludes. Joy is not baniſhed the interior of the haram. The nurſe intereſts you in the hiſtory of paſt times, by the manner in which ſhe relates the tale. Gay or tender airs are ſung; ſlaves accompany the voice with the tambour de baſque and caſtanets. The *almé* ſometimes come to enliven the ſcene by their dances, and the touching melody of their voices. They gracefully repeat

(b) Odyſſey, lib. 21.

paſſionate

paſſionate romances. A collation, where perfumes and exquiſite fruits are in abundance, terminates the daily ſcene. Thus do the Egyptian women ſtrive to charm the liſtleſſneſs of their captivity.

Yet they are not wholly priſoners. They have permiſſion once or twice a week to go to the bath, and to viſit their relations and their friends. Another duty they are permitted to perform, is, to weep over the dead. I have often ſeen, in the environs of Cairo, diſconſolate mothers, repeating funeral hymns around the tombs which they had covered with odoriferous plants. It was thus that Hecuba *(c)* and Andromache

(c) I ſhall lay before you the lamentations of *Andromache*, and of *Fatima*.

ANDROMACHE.

"O my huſband, thou dieſt in the flower of thy "age! Thou leaveſt me a widow in a deſert palace, "Before this helpleſs infant, the unhappy offspring "of our love, arrives at puberty, the city of Troy "will be overthrown. Thou art no more. Thou "who defendedſt her ramparts, who protectedſt her "women from violence, and her children from cap-"tivity. Triumphant veſſels prepare to lead them

mache poured forth their lamentations near the body of Hector. It was thus that

"into bondage, and I shall be amongst the number "of the captives. O! my son! thou must share in "my misfortune; thy hands will be employed in un- "worthy labours, by order of a cruel master; per- "haps even one of those Greeks, whose father, son, "or brother has fallen by the hands of Hector, will "precipitate thee in his fury from the summit of one "of our towers; for Hector was terrible in his com- "bats, and he often covered the earth with the bo- "dies of his enemies. All Ilion celebrates his va- "lour, and bewails his loss. Oh my husband! thy "death is a dreadful stroke for thy parents, but they "are less to be pitied than I am. Hadst thou but "in dying, amidst thy family, stretched out thy "hand to thy unhappy spouse! had but thy mouth "addressed her in consoling words! I should have "preserved the memory of them in my heart, and have "recalled them night and day to my memory, amidst "my tears and sighs." Iliad, lib. 24.

FATIMA.

"O my father! O minister of the most high! O "prophet of the merciful God! All then is over! "The divine revelation is buried with thee. The "angel Gabriel has for ever taken his flight to hea- "ven. Supreme Being, grant my last prayers. Hasten "to unite my soul to his; enable me again to behold

"his

that Fatima and Sophia wept over that of Mahomet. Nor were the Romans ſtrangers to this cuſtom. They had their funeral urns which they crowned with cypreſs. With what elegance does Horace ſtrew flowers over the urn of Quintilius! How touching and tender *(d)* is the ode he addreſſes to Virgil on the death of their common friend! Amongſt the European nations, where the ties of blood are not ſo ſtrict, thoſe religious duties paid to the dead by the piety of the ancients, are as much as poſſible ſuperſeded; but one only dies without regret, when one has not known the happineſs of being loved in life.

" his face; deprive me not of the fruit of his merits " and interceſſion at the day of judgment."

Then taking a little duſt from off his coffin, and holding it near her face, ſhe added " When one has " ſmelt the duſt of his tomb, can one any longer " reliſh the flavour of the moſt exquiſite perfumes? " Alas! all theſe agreeable ſenſations are loſt to my " heart. The clouds of melancholy, which riſe " around me, would change the moſt beautiful days " into gloomy nights." *Vie de Mahomet*, p. 235.

(d) Horace, ode 24.

The Egyptian women treat one another in the moſt affectionate manner on their viſits. When a woman enters a haram, the miſtreſs of the houſe riſes, makes offer of her hand, puts it on her heart, embraces her, and ſeats her by her ſide. A female ſlave haſtens to take off her black cloke, and ſhe is deſired to put herſelf at her eaſe. She lays aſide her veil, and her ſhift *(e)*, and retains only a flowing robe which is perfectly adapted to her ſhape, and is faſtened round the middle by a ſaſh. Compliments are then paid her in the oriental ſtyle *(f)*. "My mother or my ſiſter, "why have you ſo long neglected us? "we were ſighing after your company. It "embelliſhes our houſe, it conſtitutes "the happineſs of our lives," &c.

(e) A habit of ceremony which goes over the other clothes, except the collar, it is like the *chemiſe* adopted by the French women. It is taken off, as ſoon as they are ſeated, to be freer and lighter clad. In Arabic they call it *camis*.

(f) The titles of Mrs. Miſs, &c. are unknown in Egypt. An elderly woman is called *mother*, a younger woman *ſiſter*, a young girl *daughter of the houſe*.

Slaves

Slaves then preſent her with coffee, ſherbet, and ſweetmeats. They chat, they laugh, and toy together. A large diſh is placed on the ſopha, which is covered with pomegranates, bananas, and excellent melons. The daughter of the houſe, holding a ewer full of water mixed with roſe-water, preſents it to waſh with, in a ſilver plate. During the time they eat, noiſy mirth, and joyous converſation ſeaſon the repaſt. The wood of aloes is kept burning in the caſſolet, and perfumes the apartment. After the collation, ſlaves dance to the noiſe of cymbals, and the ladies often take a ſhare in their amuſements. Before they part they often repeat "God preſerve your health! Heaven "grant you a numerous progeny! God "preſerve your children, the joy and glory "of your family *(g)*."

During the whole time a ſtranger is in the haram the huſband is not allowed to approach it. It is the aſylum of hoſpita-

(g) I mention theſe wiſhes, which are very ancient in the Eaſt, ſince they are often to be met with in the holy ſcriptures.

lity, and cannot be violated without dangerous conſequences. This is a privilege the Egyptian women carefully maintain, and it is rendered dear to them by a very powerful motive. A lover in diſguiſe may be thus introduced into the forbidden place *(b)*, and it is of the laſt importance not to be diſcovered. Death would pay the forfeit of the attempt. Love in this country, where the paſſions are impetuous, both from the nature of the climate, and the obſtacles it meets with, is often followed by tragic ſcenes.

The Turkiſh women go always under the guard of eunuchs, to take the air on the Nile, and enjoy the proſpect of its charming banks. There are handſome apartments in their boats, richly decorated. They are adorned with ſculpture, and are agreeably painted. They are diſtinguiſhable, from the blinds let down over the windows, and the muſic that accompanies them.

(b) I have already ſaid that *Haram* ſignifies prohibited place.

When

When they cannot go abroad, they endeavour to enliven their priſon. Towards the ſetting ſun they mount upon the terrace, and enjoy the cool of the evening amidſt the flowers which are carefully preſerved there. They often bathe themſelves, and enjoy, at once, the coolneſs of the water, the perfume of odoriferous plants, the freſh air, and the ſight of a million ſtars ſhining in the firmament.

So was *Bathſheba* bathing herſelf, when David *(i)* ſaw her from the top of his palace.

The Turks, to prevent their women from being ſeen from the tops of the minarets, oblige the public criers to ſwear that they will ſhut their eyes at the hours when they mount up them to announce the prayers; but a more effectual precaution they take is, to chooſe *blind men* for theſe pious functions.

Such, Sir, is the ordinary life of the Egyptian women. To bring up their children, to employ themſelves ſolely in

(i) Book of Kings, chap. 11.

the

the affairs of houſe-keeping, to live retired in the interior of their family, conſtitute their duties. To viſit and give entertainments to each other, where they often reſign themſelves to wanton mirth, and to the greateſt freedoms, to go on the water, or walk under the ſhade of orange-trees, and to hear the *almé*; theſe are their amuſements. They deck themſelves out with as much art to receive their acquaintances, as the French women do to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the eyes of the men. Naturally timid and gentle, they become forward, and are hurried away by paſſion, when once a violent appetite gets poſſeſſion of their ſouls. Then neither bolts nor bars, nor the Cerberuſes who ſurround them, are any obſtacle to their deſires. Death itſelf, ſuſpended over their heads, does not hinder them from contriving means to ſatisfy their paſſions, and they are ſeldom ineffectual.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

An intrigue which happened at Roſetta, between an European and a young girl, a native of Georgia.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

TO complete, Sir, the portrait of the Egyptian women, I ſhall recount to you an adventure of gallantry, which happened a ſhort time ago at Roſetta. It will give you an idea of the manner in which they love in this country. To paint manners, we muſt make uſe of facts, not reaſoning. I ſhall only be careful to throw a veil over my pictures. Should my narrative become animated, attribute it to the nature of the ſubject.

Old *Haſſan*, a very jealous Turk, had married a Georgian girl of ſixteen; ſhe was never ſuffered to be out of ſight; but is there any barrier againſt love? This Seignior who was very rich, poſſeſſed ſome beautiful eſtates in the environs of Roſetta. At a quarter of a league's diſtance from the town he had a magnificent garden, where he

he permitted young Gemilé (for that was her name) to go in the evenings to take the air, attended by ſeveral ſlaves of both ſexes. The men kept the gate, and ſtood ſentry round the walls. The women followed her into the garden. There ſhe walked penſively under the orange bowers. The murmur of the waters, the freſhneſs of the verdure, the tender accents of the turtle doves which inhabit theſe hallowed groves, only added food to her melancholy. She gathered fruit and ate it without taſte, ſhe plucked a flower, and ſmelt it without enjoyment. The pleaſures ſhe partook of with her women, only ſerved to whet her deſires. One evening as ſhe was paſſing along the river to go to her garden, covered with her veil, and ſurrounded by her ſlaves, ſhe perceived an European who had lately arrived at Roſetta *(k)*. His dreſs, ſo different from that of the Turks, made her remark him. The bloom of youth ſtill glowing on his cheeks, not yet made tawny

(k) The Europeans may keep their dreſs at Roſetta; but they run a riſk in going far from the town in it.

by

by the ſun, caught her attention. She paſſed him ſlowly, and let her fan drop *(l)*, to have a pretence for ſtopping a moment. She met his eyes, and his looks penetrated to the very bottom of her ſoul. The air, the ſhape, every feature, every attitude of the ſtranger, remained imprinted on her memory. The impoſſibility of ſpeaking to him, the dread of ſeeing him no more, gave her the moſt lively feelings of her bondage; and a growing deſire, from the conſtraint in which ſhe lived, became at once an impetuous paſſion. Scarcely had ſhe entered the ſhady grove, before ſhe ſtole away from the troubleſome crowd, and taking aſide one of her women, in whom ſhe placed the greateſt confidence, "Did you obſerve, ſaid ſhe, the young ſtran-"ger? what vivacity is there in his eyes! "what looks he darted towards me! O "my friend, O my dear Zetfé! go and find "him. Tell him to come to-morrow un-"der the orange-trees that line the gar-"den, near the wood of date-trees, where

(l) The Egyptian women carry fans made of feathers, faſtened in a handle of wood, of a ſemicircular form.

"the

"the wall is loweſt. Tell him that I "wiſh to ſee him; to converſe with "him; only let him take care to elude "the vigilance of my mercileſs keepers." The meſſage was punctually conveyed. The European promiſed without reflection, but was prevented by the dangers to which he would be expoſed. The ſlave diſguiſed like a merchant, finds him a ſecond time, and enquires why he had broke his word. He made ſeveral excuſes, and fixed a diſtant day of rendezvous, that he might conſider of the meaſure. Reflection prevailed over deſire. The ſight of a place prepared for impaling ſome unhappy wretch alive, froze his courage. He did not keep his aſſignation. Zetſé returns a third time, after ſome ſharp reproaches, tells him of her miſtreſs's paſſion for him, and of the horror in which ſhe held old Haſſan. She extolled the charms, the beauty, and painted the ill fortune of a young woman torn from her parents, and ſold to a barbarian. The young man, ſeduced by this portrait, vowed that he would be the next day under the ſhade, an hour after ſunſet.

The

The beautiful Gemilé ſtill full of confidence, tho' hitherto deceived, had gone into the bath. Her black locks, which formed a contraſt to the fairneſs of her complexion, were juſt waſhed with roſe water, and flowing in treſſes down to her very feet. She was perfumed with precious eſſences. A girdle richly embroidered diſplayed her ſhape, and faſtened her light dreſs, which, without being made to project artificially, aſſumed the exact form of her body, and defined all its contours. She had thrown off her veil and mantle; an India handkerchief adorned with pearls, crowned her head. All brilliant as ſhe was with the graces of youth, ſhe ſtill feared ſhe was not handſome enough; ſhe waited with anxiety, now quickening her pace, then ſuddenly ſtopping ſhort, and lying down to roll amongſt the flowers. She ſtarted at the leaſt noiſe, and caſt her eyes towards the country. The ſun was ſet, the ſtars began to ſhine. Night, ſo beautiful in this climate, night, whoſe delicious coolneſs repairs the exhauſted ſtrength, and reſtores the ſoul to its full energy, had ſpread her veil

veil over all nature, and thickened her ſhades on the bower which concealed the amorous Gemilé. Each breath of wind which ſhook the leaves, alternately extinguiſhed and revived fear and hope in her fluttering heart. Uncertainty, the torment of paſſionate lovers, made her experience at once a thouſand miſeries.

The moment of returning to the town was come, and ſhe found herſelf again deceived for the third time. Rage takes place of tender ſentiments. She breathes nothing but revenge, and is on the point of commanding the death of her deceiver; but endowed as ſhe was with more ſenſibility than vanity, hope and deſire ſoon got the better of her reſentment. "No, ſaid ſhe, "he ſhall not die; go, my dear Zetfé, go "and be the bearer of peaceful tidings. "Diſſipate his fears, paint to him my "love, and let him come and taſte its "value."

Zetfé returns to the European, calms his apprehenſions, gives him a lively repreſentation of the tenderneſs of her miſtreſs, and the good fortune which was offered

fered him. The imprudent youth, unable to reſiſt ſuch a ſeducing picture, made freſh promiſes; but ſcarcely was he alone, before the idea of an ignominious death made him violate his vows. Patience may be exhauſted. That of Gemilé continued long. For nine months did ſhe ſolicit a man whom ſhe had only ſeen for a moment. She pleaded in his behalf, who merited no excuſes. To theſe fruitleſs attempts ſhe added freſh ones, and could not prevail on herſelf to loſe the fruit of ſo much labour. One evening that ſhe had been pouring forth bitter tears, one evening that ſhe had forgot herſelf under the ſhade, with thinking on him ſhe loved, and whoſe image was perpetually before her eyes, old Haſſan, tired of waiting for her, uſed her ill. The charm was broken. She retired furious into her apartment. Deſpairing love tranſported her to vengeance, but mitigated, whilſt it pronounced the ſentence; "Hearken, ſaid ſhe to her faithful Zetfé, "go to-morrow at ſun-riſe, find this per-"fidious European, and convey to him "my laſt words: Stranger, I have ſeen thee;

"I thought thee poſſeſſed of ſenſibility,
"and my heart wiſhed to belong to thee.
"For nine months thou haſt betrayed my
"hopes. Thou makeſt a ſport of perjury.
"Take heed *(n)*, thy life is in my hands,
"and I am irritated. On Thurſday, Haſ-
"ſan ſets out for Faoüé, he returns late,
"I ſhall paſs the day in the country.
"Come and receive thy pardon at my
"feet, or a ſlave ſhall bring me thy head.
"I have ſworn it by the prophet; Gemilé
"will be ſatisfied, or revenged."

Zetfé faithfully repeats the words of her miſtreſs, and the European deliberates no longer. That death appeared preferable to him at leaſt, which promiſed pleaſures; he made a preſent to the ſlave, conjured her to calm the rage of Gemilé, and aſſured her that he would not fail to be at the place of rendezvous a little after ſun-ſet. He was not however without uneaſineſs. Is it a ſnare laid for him? May ſhe not be diſpoſed to puniſh ſo many breaches of

(n) It is very eaſy for a Turkiſh woman to get a ſtranger aſſaſſinated, or even to get him capitally puniſhed. She has only to expreſs a wiſh.

promiſe?

promiſe? Does a Turkiſh woman know the pleaſure of pardoning? Can wounded pride ever be brought to relent? The day arrives. His anxiety augments. A thouſand ideas run counter in his mind. A thouſand ſentiments diſtract his ſoul. No matter; he muſt go. The image of a beautiful woman who is waiting for him, ſets him on fire, and hides the danger from his eyes. He arms himſelf at the approach of night, croſſes the field of rice, ſteals along the wood of date-trees, and reaches the wall that ſeparates him from his fair Georgian. His heart beats; he looks whether any body ſees him; he ſprings upon the wall, and deſcends into the garden. At the ſight of him, two women riſe up and ſeem frightened. He remains motionleſs. One of them, it was Gemilé, ſtretches out her hand, and encourages him. He approaches her, and makes a profound bow, ſhe tenderly raiſes him, makes a ſign, and her ſlave retires. "Stranger, ſays ſhe to "him, why haſt thou ſo long deceived "me? thou didſt not love me then?"— "Pardon, beautiful Gemilé, fear alone has

" hitherto reſtrained me; but I come to " throw myſelf at your feet, to repair my " miſconduct." She attempts to renew her reproaches; they expire on her lips. She takes the young man by the hand, which trembles in hers, and leads him, " nothing loth," under a thick bower of orange-trees. The foliage was ſilvered over by the moon; The graſs was covered with flowers. The delicious odour of the plants conveyed voluptuouſneſs into all the ſenſes. The gauze and ſilk ſhe wore, ſcarcely concealed the charms of Gemilé. The moments were precious; and hiſtory ſays that the two lovers knew how to make the moſt of them.

This adventure, Sir, will appear improbable, as it will be judged relatively to European manners. I could eaſily have *frenchified* the circumſtances. Then it might have appeared natural. But where would have been the advantage of it? Another error added to the number! It would have been ſaid, the Egyptian are like the European women, without reflecting

them, produced by ſlavery on one hand, and freedom on the other; I have rather choſen to relate a fact which is improbable, than to dreſs out a fable with the colour of truth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XVII.

Journey from Grand Cairo to Gizé, where the French merchants have a country house; the route from Gizé to the pyramids, with an exact account of their height, as described both by ancient and modern travellers. It is shewn that the great pyramid is at present 600 *feet high; but that in the time of Herodotus, when the sand was not accumulated round its base, it measured almost* 800 *feet perpendicular.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

YOU are surprised, Sir, that I have hitherto made no mention of the pyramids. You expect a description of them, which may clear your doubts, and determine your judgment. This has been the very reason of my silence. I have only delayed it hitherto from the desire of ascertaining facts, and of giving such particulars as may gratify your curiosity. One journey

journey was not ſufficient. I arrive from a ſecond one with the Count d'Antragues, who has been led into Egypt by his thirſt after knowledge. This French nobleman unites the moſt amiable qualities with a great deal of underſtanding and much information.

We ſet out from Grand Cairo after dinner, and went out of town by the quarter of *Haneſi*. The Nile was on our right, and the canal of *the Prince of the Faithful* on our left. The plain we croſſed extends as far as *Maſr Foſtat*. It is interſected by lakes, by clumps of trees, and gardens. There are ſeveral country houſes alſo belonging to the grandees. The moſt conſiderable is that of Ibrahim Bey, *Cheik Elbeled (o)*, whither he often brings his women. They have for a walk, a vaſt encloſure planted with orange and pomegranate trees, with a covered terrace, which overlooks the river. It is there they ſpend a part of their days in captivity. A little

(o) It is, as I have already ſaid, the title aſſumed by the moſt powerful amongſt the Beys, and ſignifies Governor of the country.

farther is a large building inhabited by the derviſes. It is ſaid that their proximity is a ſubject of conſolation to the fair priſoners.

At the extremity of the plain we found the opening of the canal of the Prince of the Faithful, and the water-caſtle. We traverſed a part of Old Cairo, and embarking at the point of the *Mekias* we landed at Gizé, where the French merchants hire handſome country-houſes. We paſſed the evening there, impatient to continue our journey. Before we ſet out it was neceſſary to make a preſent to the *Kiachef (p)*, who promiſed us two *Cheiks (q)*, to ſecure us from being pillaged by the Arabs. This was formerly a voluntary gift, but at preſent is become a tribute, which the governor exacts from European curioſity. It originated with the Engliſh, who in returning from Bengal never fail to viſit the pyramids. The ridiculous vanity of theſe *Nabobs* diſtributing their gold by handfuls, flecting on the immenſe difference between

(p) Governor.

(q) Man of the law, or of authority amongſt the Arabs.

them

renders travelling more expenſive and more difficult for thoſe who have not had the fortune to govern the rich provinces of Bengal.

The preſent being accepted, and the eſcort arrived, we quitted Gizé at about one o'clock in the morning. Scarcely had we travelled a quarter of a league before we perceived the ſummit of the two great pyramids, from which we were three leagues diſtant. The full moon ſhone upon them, and they appeared like two points of rock crowned by the clouds. The ſight of theſe ancient monuments, which have outlived the deſtruction of nations, the fall of empires, and the ravages of time, inſpires a ſort of veneration. The calmneſs of the air, the ſilence of the night, added ſtill further to their majeſty. The ſoul, caſting an eye over the ages that have paſſed away before their unſhaken maſs, trembles with an involuntary reſpect. Hail to the remains of the ſeven wonders of the world! Honour be to the power of that people who could raiſe them!

It is in the rich territory which ſurrounds them, that fable has placed the Elyſian fields. The canals which interſect them are the Styx and Lethé. Penetrated with ideas of mythology, you think you behold the ſhades of heroes and virtuous men fleeting by your ſides. You think you hear the laſt adieu of Eurydice. How many affecting images have theſe places, celebrated by Orpheus and by Homer, furniſhed to poetry!

We kept advancing however, and the pyramids, whoſe aſpects varied according to the circuits we made in the plain, and the poſition of the clouds, diſplayed themſelves more and more to view. At half paſt three in the morning we arrived at the foot of the greateſt. We left our clothes at the gate of the paſſage which leads to the inſide, and deſcended, carrying each of us a flambeau in his hand. Towards the bottom you muſt creep like ſerpents to get into the interior paſſage which correſponds with the former. We mounted it on our knees, ſupporting ourſelves with our hands againſt the ſides. Without this precaution

one

one runs the risk of slipping on the inclined plane, where the slight notches are insufficient to stop the foot, and one might fall to the bottom. Towards the middle we fired a pistol, the frightful noise of which, repeated in the cavities of this immense edifice, continued a long time, and awakened thousands of bats, which flying round us, struck against our hands and faces, and extinguished several of our wax candles. They are much larger than the European bats. Arrived above, we entered a great hall, the gate of which is very low. It is an oblong square, wholly composed of granite. Seven enormous stones extend from one wall to the other, and form the roof. A sarcophagus made of one block of marble lies at one end of it. This monument has been violated by the hands of men. It is empty, and the lid of it has been wrenched off. Some pieces of earthen vases lie around it. Under this beautiful hall is a chamber not so large, where you find the entrance to a conduit filled with rubbish. After examining these caves, where day-light never penetrated,

and

and where eternal night thickens his gloomy ſhades, we deſcended the ſame way, taking care not to fall into a well *(r)*, which is on the left, and goes to the very foundations of the pyramid. The internal air of this edifice never being renewed, is ſo hot, and mephitic, that one is almoſt ſuffocated. When we came out of it, we were dropping with ſweat, and pale as death. We might have been taken for ſpectres. After greedily breathing the external air, and refreſhing ourſelves with it, we loſt no time in ſcaling this mountain made by the hands of men. It is compoſed of more than two hundred layers of ſtone. They overlap each other in proportion to their elevation, which is from two to four feet. It is neceſſary to climb up all theſe enormous ſteps to reach the top. We undertook it at the North-Eaſt angle, which is the leaſt damaged. It took us however, half an hour with great pains and many efforts to effect it.

(r) Pliny knew of it.—There is in the pyramid a well 26 cubits deep. Lib. 36.

The

The ſun was riſing, and his gilding was gradually ſpreading over the eaſt. We enjoyed a pure air, and a moſt delicious coolneſs. Preſently he began to gild the point of the *Mokattam (s)*, and his luminous diſk appeared on the edge of the mountain. We received his firſt rays, and diſtinguiſhed in the ſhade the points of the pyramids of Saccara, at three leagues diſtance from us in the plain of the mummies. The light deſcended rapidly. The minarets, and the tops of the date-trees, planted round the villages, built on eminences, appeared enlightened. Every inſtant diſcovered to us new beauties. As this luminary mounted in the heavens, he ſpread his burning rays over the mountains and the valley of Egypt. The flocks were deſcending from the hamlets, boats under ſail were going up the Nile. We followed with our eyes the vaſt contours formed by him in the plain. To the north we had barren hills, and parched ſands; to the ſouth, the river, and an ocean of harveſts;

(s) The mountain which overlooks Grand Cairo.

to

to the eaſt, to complete the picture, we perceived the ſmall town of Gizé, the towers of Maſr Foſtat, the minarets of Grand Cairo, and the caſtle of Salah Eddin.—Seated on the loftieſt and moſt ancient monument of men, as on a throne, by running over the horizon, we ſaw a frightful deſert; a rich country where lay the Elyſian fields, hamlets, towns, a majeſtic river, and edifices, which ſeemed to be the work of giants. There is not in the univerſe a more varied, a more magnificent, and more awful ſpectacle. It elevates the mind, and forces it to contemplation.

After engraving our names on the ſummit of the pyramid, we deſcended cautiouſly, for we had the abyſs before us. A piece of ſtone detaching itſelf under our feet or hands, might have ſent us to the bottom.

Arrived at the foot of the pyramid, we made the tour of it, contemplating it with a ſort of horror. When viewed cloſe, it ſeems to be made of maſſes of rocks; but at a hundred paces diſtance, the largeneſs of the ſtones

ſtones is loſt in the immenſity of the whole, and they appear very ſmall.

To determine its dimenſions is ſtill a problem. From the time of Herodotus to our days, it has been meaſured by a great number of travellers and learned men, and their different calculations, far from clearing up doubts, have only increaſed the uncertainty. I ſhall give you a table of them, which will ſerve at leaſt to prove how difficult it is to come at the truth.

Height of the great pyramid.	Width of one of its ſides.
Ancients.	French feet.
Herodotus - 800	- - - - 800
Strabo - - 625	- - - - 600
Diodorus Siculus 600 and a fraction.	700
Pliny - - - - - - - - -	708
Moderns.	
Le Bruyn - 616	- - - - 704
Proſper Alpinus 625	- - - - 750
Thevenot - 520	- - - - 682
Nieburh - 440	- - - - 719
Greaves - 444	- - - - 648

Number

Number of layers of ſtone which form it.

Greaves -	207	- - layers.
Maillet - -	208	
Albert Liewenſtein	260	
Pocock - - -	212	
Belon - - -	250	
Thevenot - -	208	

It appears to me that Meſſieurs Greaves and Nieburh have prodigiouſly deceived themſelves in meaſuring the perpendicular height of the great pyramid. All the travellers allow, in fact, that it has at leaſt two hundred layers of ſtone. Now, theſe layers, are from two to four feet high *(u)*.

(u) The layers are from four feet and a half to four feet high, being not ſo high at the top as at the baſe. *Pocock, deſcription of the Eaſt, 1ſt volume.*

The elevation of the firſt layer is five feet, but it diminiſhes inſenſibly in proportion as one mounts. *Proſper Alpinus, chap.* 6. *of the Pyramids.*

This pyramid has 208 ſteps of large ſtones, the thickneſs of which makes the height of them about two feet and a half, one with another, for I have meaſured ſome of them more than three feet high. Thevenot, *p.* 242.

The

The higheſt are at the baſe, and decreaſe inſenſibly to the top. I have meaſured ſeveral of them which were more than three feet high, and I found none leſs than two, the leaſt height of them we can take as a medium, therefore, is two feet and a half, which, even according to Mr. Greaves's calculation, who reckons 207 layers, would make 517 feet ſix inches perpendicular height.

Obſerve that Meſſieurs Greaves, Maillet, Thevenot, and Pocock, who only differ in the number of the layers, from 207 to 212, all mounted by the North-eaſt angle, as the leaſt injured. I followed the ſame route, and counted only 208 ſteps. But if we reflect that the pyramid has been open on the ſide next the deſart, that the ſtones on that ſide have been thrown down, that the ſand which covers them has formed a conſiderable hill, we ſhall not be aſtoniſhed that Albert Liewenſtein, Belon, and Proſper Alpinus, who muſt have mounted by the South-eaſt, or South-weſt angle, which are leſs expoſed to the ſands of Lybia, ſhould have found a greater number of

ſteps, ſo that the calculation of theſe travellers, agreeing with that of Diodorus Siculus and Strabo, appears to be neareſt the true height of the pyramid taken at its natural baſe; whence we may conclude with reaſon, that it is at leaſt ſix hundred feet high. Indeed this is authenticated by a paſſage of Strabo *(x)*. Theſe are his words, "Towards the middle of the height "of one of the ſides, is a ſtone that may "be raiſed up. It ſhuts an oblique "paſſage which leads to a coffin placed in "the center of the pyramid." This paſſage open in our days, and which in the time of Strabo *(y)*, was towards the middle of one face of the pyramid, is at preſent only a hundred feet from the baſe. So that the ruins of the covering of the pyramid, and of the ſtones brought from within, buried by the ſand, have formed a hill in this place two hundred feet high *(z)*. Pliny comes in aid of this opinion. The great Sphynx was in his time upwards of 62 feet above the ſurface of the ground.

(x) Strabo, lib. 17. p. 1161.

(y) That is to ſay, in the Auguſtan age.

(z) Pliny, lib. 36. page 861.

Its

Its whole body is at preſent buried under the ſand. Nothing more appears of it than the neck and head, which are 27 feet high. If even the ſphynx, though defended by the pyramids againſt the northerly winds, which bring torrents of ſand from Libya, be covered as high as 38 feet, judge what an immenſe quantity muſt have been heaped up to the northward of an edifice whoſe baſe is upwards of ſeven hundred feet long. It is to this we muſt attribute the prodigious difference between the accounts of the hiſtorians who have meaſured the great pyramid at diſtant periods, and at oppoſite angles. Herodotus who ſaw it in the age neareſt to its foundation, when its true baſe was ſtill uncovered, makes it 800 feet ſquare *(a)*. This opinion appears very probable to me. It is alſo that of Pliny *(b)*, who ſays it covered the ſpace of eight acres.

Meſſieurs Shaw *(c)*, Thevenot *(d)*, and

(a) Euterpe, p. 6.
(b) Pliny the naturaliſt, lib. 36. p. 861.
(c) Geographical obſervations on Syria and Egypt.
(d) Voyage up the Levant.

the other travellers who pretend that this pyramid was never finiſhed, becauſe it is open and without coating, are in an error. It is only neceſſary to obſerve the remains of the mortar, with the ſplinters of white marble which are to be found in many parts of the ſteps, to ſee that it has been coated; after reading attentively the deſcription given of it by the ancients, every doubt vaniſhes, and the truth is as clear as day light. Let us examine ſome of theſe paſſages. "The great pyramid "was covered with poliſhed ſtones, per-"fectly well jointed, the ſmalleſt of which "was 30 feet long. It was built in the "form of ſteps, on each of which were "placed wooden machines to raiſe the "ſtones from one to another." *Herodotus. Euterpe.*

"The great pyramid is built of ſtones "very difficult of workmanſhip, but of an "eternal duration. It is preſerved to our "days *(e)*, without being in the leaſt in-"jured. The marble was brought from

(e) Towards the middle of the Auguſtan age,

"the

" the quarries of Arabia." *Diodorus Siculus, lib.* 1.

This hiſtorian thought that the whole building was compoſed of ſtones, ſimilar to thoſe of the coating, which were of very hard marble. Had there been ſome pieces torn off, he would have perceived under that covering, a rather ſoft calcareous ſtone.

" The great pyramid is formed of ſtones " brought from the quarries of Arabia. It is " not far from the village of Buſiris *(f)*, " where thoſe perſons reſide who are ſo " ſkilful as to climb up to the top." *Pliny the naturaliſt, lib.* 36.

This paſſage ſhews that Pliny, deceived by the appearance, was in the ſame error with Diodorus Siculus. It demonſtrates alſo that it was covered. For what difficulty would there have been for the inhabitants of Buſiris to ſcale a building raiſed by ſteps? but it was really a prodigy for them to get up it when it formed a mountain, the four inclined planes of

(f) This village ſtill exiſts; it is called *Bouſir*, and is only a ſhort league from the pyramids.

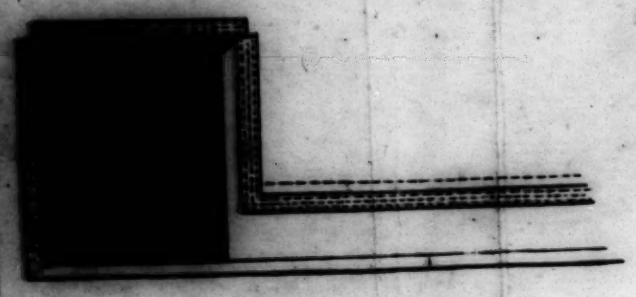
which preſented a ſurface covered with poliſhed marble.

I ſhall not purſue my remarks any farther, to prove to you that the great pyramid had a coating of marble. It is an inconteſtible fact. It is as certain too that it has been ſhut, as Strabo gives us to underſtand; and that by removing a ſtone placed in the middle of one of the ſides, one found a paſſage which led to the tomb of the king; but I ſhall leave Mr. Maillet, who viſited it forty times with all imaginable attention, the honour of laying before you the means employed to open it. I have examined the inſide of it in two different journeys; twice I have mounted it, and I cannot help admiring the ſagacity with which that author has developed the mechaniſm of that aſtoniſhing edifice. I ſhall ſubjoin his enquiries, and his plan of the pyramid, ſince I could only expreſs myſelf as he does, and all the honour of the diſcovery belongs to him. I ſhall only add ſome neceſſary notes.

I have the honour to be, &c.

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Plate II



Plan of



of the Inside of the Great Pyramid.

LETTER XVIII.

Remarks on the interior ſtructure of the great pyramid, its apartments, the means employed by the architects to ſhut it, and render it inacceſſible, with the method now uſed of procuring admittance. This article is extracted from the learned Maillet. Subjoined is a chart, with notes, and reflections.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

NOT only, Sir, has the great pyramid been coated, and finiſhed on the outſide, but it was ſhut, and has been forcibly opened. This I take upon me to eſtabliſh, ſo as to leave no doubt of the fact.

This violence may be remarked in the firſt place at the natural entry of the pyramid, whence, as may be ſeen with a

little attention, ſome of the ſtones which ſhut it, and were of an enormous ſize, have been removed. Theſe ſtones were placed above a paſſage, which, by a ſteep deſcent, leads you to the centre of the pyramid, and to the chambers where the bodies of thoſe who had built it were to be depoſited. This paſſage, which ſlopes very rapidly, is one hundred feet long, and has its entrance at a hundred feet from the baſe of the pyramid. You get to it by a ſort of hill, of about that height, formed by the ruins of the pyramid itſelf. The paſſage is three feet three inches ſquare, and is filled from top to bottom with very even ſtones, of the ſame marble of which it is compoſed. Above the opening of the entrance into this paſſage, one remarks in the body of the pyramid, a ſpace of nine or ten feet, whence ſtones of a prodigious ſize have been carried off, as appears from thoſe which remain. This remark alone would ſufficiently prove that the pyramid has been cloſed, ſince theſe ſtones can only have been removed, to diſcover

diſcover the entrance of the paſſage, or to get a better hold of thoſe which were in the paſſage itſelf, and which were bound to thoſe that have been wrenched off. This may be obſerved at the letter A. After removing theſe prodigious ſtones, and thoſe of the paſſage, which were under the former, it was eaſy to draw out the others, by taking hold of the part of them that projected externally. It is ſuppoſed, in order to render the execution of ſuch an enterprize more difficult, that in placing theſe ſtones in the paſſage, they were covered with a very ſtrong cement, that they might adhere more cloſely to the wall of the paſſage, and conſtitute only one maſs with the whole body of the building; but by making uſe of ſtronger powers, and by the means of hot-water running in the channel marked B. they had ſucceeded in deſtroying the quality of the cement, and in detaching theſe ſtones, which they then drew out with little trouble. It is certain, at leaſt that they have been able to extract them without at all injuring the ſtones which form the paſſage.

paſſage. In fact, they are as well poliſhed at preſent, as on the firſt day, except in the bottom of the paſſage, where they have ſince hammered out cavities two or three fingers deep. This precaution was neceſſary, to facilitate the entry and return of the perſons who viſit the pyramid. It is eaſy to conceive, that, were it not for this aid, it would be impoſſible to deſcend this paſſage, without being hurried rapidly to the bottom; and that to remount, it would be neceſſary to tie one's ſelf by cords faſtened at the external entrance.

I have hinted above that this paſſage was compoſed of marble; I further add, that the ſtones which form its four ſides, are in fact, of the fineſt white marble, and conſequently the hardeſt. I acknowledge that it is rather of a yellowiſh caſt; owing, doubtleſs, to length of time *(g)*. One of theſe

(g) It is not grown yellow from time, it is its natural colour. There is at the foot of Mount Colzoum, on the weſtern coaſt of the Red Sea, an immenſe quarry of this yellow marble. The ſandy plain which leads to it is called *Elaraba---the Plain of Waggons.* This name is undoubtedly derived from the

theſe prodigious ſtones which were removed, as I have ſaid, from before the aperture of the paſſage, when the pyramid was forced, is ſtill to be ſeen at the entrance. It is cuſtomary to get upon it and eat, when one viſits this illuſtrious monument. It is undoubtedly of the ſame marble, as well as all thoſe which form the other paſſages. It is on this principle I have advanced, that the ſtones, which cloſed the firſt paſſage I have juſt ſpoken of, and even all the other paſſages of the pyramid, were alſo of the ſame marble, preferred, doubtleſs, to any other, on account of its extreme durability. It is very eaſy to aſcertain this, by lifting up one half of the ſtone ſtill exiſting at the place marked C. where the interior and exterior paſſages join. With reſpect to the inſide of the pyramid, it is ſo dark, and ſo blackened

the waggons made uſe of to convey the marble to the Nile, from whence it was tranſported, by water, almoſt to the foot of the pyramids. Herodotus and Pliny aſſure us that the ſtones, with which they were covered, were brought from the quarries of Arabia, becauſe that part of Egypt was then called Arabia.

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by the ſmoke of the candles, and wax-lights burnt there for ages, by perſons who have viſited it, that it is difficult to form an accurate judgment of the quality of the ſtones of the halls, and other places within this enormous maſs. One only obſerves that they have been finely poliſhed, that they are of the greateſt durability, and ſo well jointed, that it is impoſſible to inſert the point of a knife between them.

They had cleared this firſt paſſage, and accompliſhed this laborious work, when a ſecond, ſtill more conſiderable, preſented itſelf. It was then neceſſary to extract the ſtones with which another paſſage was filled, which went up from this towards the ſummit of the pyramid, by a route as ſteep as the other was ſloping. The firſt queſtion was, how to find out where the paſſage which mounted towards the top terminated in that which they had opened; and I ſuppoſe they diſcovered it, although the ſtone, which cloſed this paſſage, was ſo exactly fitted, as to leave no mark

of

of any opening whatever. It could only be obſerved, that it did not, like the others, paſs over the upper part of the firſt paſſage: this was diſcovered by ſounding with the point of a knife, or ſome other inſtrument, which could eaſily be puſhed into the cement that covered this ſtone, and joined it to thoſe of the lower paſſage. This was found out, at ten feet from the end of the latter paſſage, the better to deceive thoſe who might ſearch to diſcover this opening. This ſtone was firſt attacked, and it was no eaſy work. The place was very narrow, and the work muſt have been carried on above the head, by lying on the back, without being able to uſe the ſtrength of the arms but very feebly, and at the riſk of being cruſhed every moment by a heavy maſs ready to fall upon them. This may be ſeen by caſting the eye on the figure, at letter C. After overcoming, however, by the hammer, the reſiſtance of this firſt ſtone, which muſt have had a hold in this place, there ſucceeded a ſecond, which ran along the bottom of the paſſage, and which muſt have been

been worked in another manner. At length they got the better of this as well as of the former; but as another ſtill preſented itſelf, the labour being thought too tedious, this method was abandoned, and after preventing the deſcent of the ſtone which followed, and ſhut up the entrance of the paſſage, they made at the place marked D. a forced route of forty feet long, by eight or ten feet wide, in the ſtones which lined the lower paſſage, and which were at its extremity. This route is pointed out in the plate by the letter E. *(b)*; in ſome places it is narrow and very low; in others it is high enough to admit of a man's ſtanding erect. This work coſt an infinite deal of labour. Turning at length to the left, towards the upper paſſage, they removed from the ſide of it three or four ſtones, which made an open-

(b) This uneven winding route, very different from the paſſages of the pyramid, evidently proves that it has been entered by force. What prodigious pains and labour it muſt have coſt, to clear out a road of forty feet, in a narrow ſpace, and through a maſs of enormous ſtones!

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ing of fifteen or twenty feet broad in the place marked G. But before I ſpeak of the continuation of this work, it is proper to obſerve, that the real ſtone which cloſed the paſſage in the place where it formed an angle with the lower one, that this ſtone, which had been cut in proportion to that angle, and which exactly cloſed this entry, has really been removed as I have mentioned. The ſtone in fact, with which it is at preſent cloſed, by no means fits it, but leaves, on the contrary, an interval of three or four fingers at the upper part, which ought to be longer there than at the lower. This may be ſeen at the place marked F. in the plate.

When they had wrenched off, and broken the three ſtones, which cloſed the ſide of the upper paſſage, from the place marked G, it was neceſſary to attempt to empty it of all the other ſtones, not only thoſe which correſponded with that opening, but thoſe alſo which were above, to an unknown extent. This was a difficult and very tedious undertaking, ſince only one perſon could work in a ſpace of three feet three inches

ſquare.

ſquare. There was reaſon to think, however, that beſides the great number of ſtones that might be met with in the paſſage, there might perhaps be beyond it, in a place not ſo narrow, a long continuation of the ſame ſtones ready to choke up this paſſage in proportion as it was cleared out. This was in fact an augmentation of pain and labour the architect had not failed to prepare for thoſe who ſhould attempt to penetrate by this paſſage into the centre of the pyramid. To ſave a part of this labour, inſtead of attempting to break theſe ſtones one after the other at the place marked G, where the paſſage had already been attacked and begun upon, they took the reſolution of ſupporting theſe ſtones in the paſſage itſelf, by ſtaying, by means of a prop, or otherwiſe, the ſtone above that which they intended breaking. They then ſet to the work, and beginning with thoſe ſtones which they broke and ſupported by props of a proportionable length as they proceeded, they continued it from ſtone to ſtone, and ſtill advancing, ſtill keeping within the ſize of the paſſage, until they at length

length arrived at its extremity, and at a ſpace of which I am going to ſpeak.

As for the reſt, it is proper to obſerve that as long as the paſſage laſted, and in its whole length, they were obliged to make very great efforts to break the ſtones it was filled with. The blows of the hammer, the blows they had ſtruck on the wedges they made uſe of to execute this work, ſo injured every part of this paſſage, that from being ſquare, they have made it almoſt round; which inconteſtably proves that they worked from top to bottom, and conſequently had adopted the meaſure of propping the ſtones to break them in it. Indeed had this work been executed at the opening of the paſſage marked G, where it had been begun, that part only of the paſſage would have been injured; the remainder of it, fourſcore feet in length, deſigned by the letter H in the plate, from whence the ſtones would only have ſlid to the place where the paſſage had been opened, would have remained entire, and in as good preſervation as in all the other places, where

it ſtill ſubſiſts complete, even to the hall.

When they had got to the extremity of this paſſage, they found that its upper part was wanting; they even diſcovered that it had loſt a foot of its capaciouſneſs, ſince it was no more than two feet and a half deep. This ſpace however extending from one part to the other a foot and a half in length, formed a vacancy of three feet, and made this interval ſix feet and a half wide, which compoſed on each ſide of the paſſage two elevations, or benches, two feet and a half high, and a foot and a half wide. They extended upwards in the ſame direction with the firſt paſſage, for the ſpace of one hundred and twenty-five feet in length, according to my meaſuring; others make it one hundred and forty. At the extremity of theſe benches and of the paſſage, one meets with an eſplanade or platform eight or nine feet deep, and ſix feet and a half wide, as all this interval is above the benches. This ſpace is marked by the letter R in the more extenſive plate of the extremity of the gallery, as it is given

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on the ſide of the pyramid. At the diſtance of every two feet and a half, there are formed in the benches from the bottom upwards, adjoining the wall, openings of a foot in length, ſix inches wide, and eight deep, perpendicularly cut. I ſhall explain in what follows, the uſe they were deſigned for. Theſe benches and holes which accompany the paſſage marked P, are deſigned in the plate by the letter Q.

The ſides of the gallery riſe twenty-five feet above the benches. From thence to the height of twelve feet, the wall is perfectly equal; it is then ſtraightened by a ſtone which projects about three fingers; three feet above that another ſtone projects as much, and is followed at the ſame diſtance by a third, which equally advances. A fourth, in ſhort, does the ſame three feet higher. From that there is only four feet of wall to the top, which is flat, and nearly as wide as the paſſage at the bottom of the gallery, that is to ſay, about three feet, three inches. All this elevation was neceſſary to the architect, for placing the ſtones deſtined to cloſe the paſſages. What

I have juſt been ſaying of the narrowing of the gallery in proportion as it riſes, may be ſeen in the plate marked at the two extremities by the letter S.

On coming out of the paſſage marked by the letter H, and on entering the gallery, one finds on the right hand an opening made in the wall. It occupies a part of the bench; this hole is almoſt round, cut in the ſhape of a ſmall door of about three feet high by two and a half wide. From this hole one deſcends into a well I ſhall hereafter ſpeak of, and of the uſe for which it was intended. This hole is at the letter I.

Once arrived at the gallery, it was not at all difficult to break the ſtones which filled the paſſage P, as well on account of their being above the benches, as from the greater width of the gallery, which gave the workmen liberty to employ their tools, and to ſtrike at their eaſe the iron wedges they made uſe of to wrench and ſplinter the ſtones. They could begin, in ſhort, with the laſt, which was ſtill more eaſy to break than all the others, ſince they could

ſtand

ſtand erect in the paſſage, the more eaſily to accompliſh it. After finiſhing this work, and freeing this ſpace from the rubbiſh of the broken ſtones, they would examine the bottom of the groove, and remark that the firſt ſtones with which it was covered at the diſtance of from fourteen to fifteen feet, marked by the letter L, did not traverſe the benches. On this diſcovery it was eaſy to remove theſe ſtones one after the other. This place was no ſooner cleared, than a platform appeared of ten feet long, and as many high, at the end of which was a continuation of the paſſage, and which formed at the entrance of the gallery a triangle of fourteen or fifteen feet in extent. At the ſame time, on a level with the platform, and to the left of the paſſage which led to the gallery, they diſcovered a continuation of the paſſage three feet three inches ſquare. This new paſſage was, before that, covered with ſtones which they had juſt removed. It was naturally conjectured that this road muſt neceſſarily lead to ſome ſecret part of the pyramid, which they determined to

find out. It was eaſy to extract from this paſſage, marked N in the plate, the ſtones which ſerved to block it up, ſince there was room enough to work conveniently, and they might be removed out of the paſſage in a ſtraight line. They broke them in this ſpace which was at its entrance; this paſſage was found to be one hundred and eighteen feet long, and beyond, there was a vaulted chamber.

This hall, marked in the plate O, is ſeventeen feet and a half long, and fifteen feet ten inches wide; its roof is ſharp, *en dos d'ane*, in the form of an aſs's back. On the eaſtern ſide of this hall is a niche ſunk three feet into the wall, and eight feet high by three wide. There had doubtleſs been a mummy in this niche, placed erect, according to the Egyptian cuſtom. It was probably the body of the Queen whoſe huſband built the pyramid, nor have I any doubt that this prince was buried in the hall above this, to which it was perpendicular, but about one hundred feet higher, as may be ſeen in the plate at letters O and DD. On entering this hall, the laſt ſtone

one

one finds on the right hand, had a ſhelving projection at its extremity of about three fingers, which had been done on purpoſe to prevent that which was to ſerve to cloſe up the paſſage marked N, from entering into the hall. It is probable that this latter ſtone had a notch on the ſame ſide, that it might fit well, and join the wall of the apartment which correſponded with that entry. But I ought not to quit this place without mentioning a diſcovery I made in the upper part of the paſſage *(p)*. I leave to others more expert than myſelf to determine what has been the cauſe of this accident. I am inclined to think that it muſt have been the effect of ſome earthquake, or perhaps the ſettling of this enormous maſs, either heavier, or with a leſs ſolid foundation, on one ſide than

(p) This long and very remarkable ſlit is at leaſt ſix lines in width. It ſtrikes you at firſt ſight. It is on the ſide next the Nile. Perhaps this part of the mountain, the foot of which is bathed by the waters of the river, which filtrate through the ſand, has ſhrunk a little under the tremendous weight of the pyramid.

the other. It is certain, however, that I have never obſerved a ſimilar defect in any other part of the pyramid, although I have examined it with the moſt minute attention. There is no part of the gallery in particular that I have not accurately examined. To ſupply the deficiency of a pole, which it was not poſſible to introduce through the crooked way by which one is obliged to gain the direct paſſage, I faſtened ſeveral ſticks together, at the end of which were tied ſome lighted wax-tapers; I cauſed them to be lifted as near as poſſible to the roof and the wall, without ever being able to diſcover any defect. I only obſerved that the ſides were disfigured in ſome places, and that on the right, a piece of the wall was wanting, above the narrow part of the gallery. This accident happened doubtleſs by the fall of ſome ſtone, in the ſhutting of the pyramid, the manner of doing which I ſhall hereafter deſcribe. Slipping from the workman's hands, it had fallen from the ſcaffold, and broken the place againſt which it fell.

On

On the ſubject of the firſt hall I have been ſpeaking of, I muſt obſerve likewiſe, that they imagined, no doubt, that there was ſome hidden treaſure below it. This appears from a breach made in it, by means of which one may, by paſſing over ſome irregular ſtones, penetrate into the body of the pyramid, to the depth of twenty or five-and-twenty paces. The ſtones that have been broken and extracted from that place at preſent almoſt fill the whole of the hall. The ſame attempt has been made in the upper hall; but it is probable that in both, they have had no other recompenſe for the infinite pains they took to ſpoil ſuch beautiful works, than the mortification of having fruitleſsly employed much time and labour.

After diſcovering the ſecret of this firſt hall, nothing remained but to penetrate into that where the body of the king was ſhut up. They did not doubt that they ſhould meet with it at the top of the eſplanade, which was, as I have obſerved, at the upper extremity of the gallery; and they

they concluded, with reaſon, that it muſt be ſituated above, and exactly on a level with the former. At the end of this platform, in fact, which, in the plate annexed to the pyramid, is marked with the letter R, they obſerved a continuation of the paſſage, of three feet three inches, perfectly cloſed. This they firſt ſet about clearing. This continuation of the paſſage is marked in the ſame figure by the letter T. It is probable that the firſt ſtone which cloſed it was ſo ſtrongly faſtened that it would require the greateſt trouble to force it. This appears from a piece of the upper ſtone, that has been broken, undoubtedly to get a hold on the lower one which blocked the paſſage. It was at length removed, after many efforts, and a ſecond was wrenched off alſo, which, with the former, opened a ſpace of ſeven feet and a half in length. They wiſhed to continue to penetrate this extremity of the paſſage; but after theſe two ſtones, they met with a third which could not be moved, becauſe it was higher and wider than the opening. This was the architect's laſt reſource to

deceive

deceive whoever might reach thus far, and to prevent the examining any further this myſterious hall, which was not twelve paces from that wherein repoſed the body of the king, and where his treaſures muſt be, in caſe any were buried with him. In ſpite of this difficulty however, this ſtone did not impoſe upon the workmen, nor diſcourage thoſe who had undertaken to viſit the whole pyramid. They aſſailed it with the hammer, and ſucceeded in breaking it after much time and trouble. It was ſix feet long, four wide, and poſſibly five or ſix high, ſince at this place there was a ſpace of fifteen feet high, which at the end of eight feet elevation, widened four feet, or thereabouts, on the ſide of the gallery. This extenſion is marked by the letter &. It correſponded with an opening of the paſſage one foot and a half wide, anterior to this large ſtone by two feet. I ſhall point out in the ſequel what uſe it was deſigned for.

At the top of this void there was in the wall which cloſed the paſſage on both ſides, a hollow of a foot deep, and of about the

ſame

ſame height. Theſe holes, marked in the plate by the letters AA, have been made on purpoſe. They ſerved for places for powerful levers, or croſs beams, to ſuſpend ſtrong ropes from, which, by iron rings faſtened to the great ſtone I have ſpoken of, held it ſuſpended in the void marked Z, which it filled until the time of letting it drop on the paſſage BB; that is to ſay, when the body of the king was ſhut up in the hall. The opening of a foot and a half made in the paſſage V, and which preceded by two feet the ſpace occupied by the great ſtone, was contrived to let the workmen out after they had let down that enormous ſtone. This opening was ſhut after they came out, by a ſtone two feet thick, that exactly fitted, and was brought under the opening by means of two iron rings faſtened towards the extremity of the upper part of it. To theſe two rings were fixed two chains, which correſponded above with another heavier ſtone, hanging over the top of the opening Z, occupied by the great ſtone that left it open, by falling on the paſſage.

The

The ropes which ſupported this enormous ſtone had for a point of ſupport the pillar marked Y in the plate. They reſted however on the lower ſtone, whilſt the workmen got out by the aperture of one foot and a half, which I have ſpoken of, and which remained between that and the upper opening. In ſhort, as ſoon as they had got out of that cavity, the ſtone was no longer balanced, and was lifted by the counterpoiſe into the place it was to occupy, where it was exactly fitted by another ſtone in the ſhape of an eſcutcheon three fingers wide; this eſcutcheon had been contrived by cutting the ſtone, where it is enchaſed. It is three fingers thick, by ſix or ſeven wide, and is of a man's height, when on entering the pyramid at the preſent day one raiſes one's body in the cavity marked V, which made the laſt part of the ſecret employed to ſecure the hall from violation. This ſort of eſcutcheon of three fingers thickneſs is marked by the letter X, and merits attention.

Along the walls, which form the ſides of the paſſage where the large ſtone of ſix feet

feet long, and four wide, was ſhut up, one obſerves on each ſide ſome round channels three fingers deep, the extremity of which is marked in the plate. This was done to let the ſtone fall more eaſily, and more exactly into its place, and to render it firmer and more immoveable in caſe of an attempt upon it. All theſe precautions prove the extreme pains they took to ſecure the body of the prince from violation, ſuppoſing that men might be found hardy and impious enough to undertake it. If, after the ſtone of a foot and a half wide, and three and a half long, which was the meaſure of the opening marked V formed in the paſſage, there ſtill remained the ſmalleſt degree of light, it was filled with cement. There is reaſon to believe alſo that this ſtone itſelf was covered with it, before it was introduced upwards into the cavity it was to cloſe; which rendered its poſition more ſloping, by ſupporting it againſt the force of the counterpoiſe. A few ſtrokes of the handle of the hammer would be ſufficient to free it from the cement where there was too much, and to enable

it

it to reach its deſtined place. This ſtone no longer exiſts, nor even the large one, which they were obliged to break in pieces to tear it from the place it occupied. Whoever examines with attention the diſpoſition of the cavities I have juſt deſcribed, and which precede only by ſix feet the entrance of the hall, where the king's body was depoſited, muſt be perſuaded that things have been thus executed; and in the ſmall ſpace of nine feet, muſt admire the art and ingenuity of the architect. It is to facilitate the knowledge of this, that I have repreſented at large and ſeparately, theſe different circumſtances at the ſide of the figure I have given of the pyramid. The ſight will explain the ſecret, better than any detail.

After extracting by the force of the hammer, and in fragments, the great ſtone from the channelled ſpace where it had deſcended, they got to the laſt, which terminated at the hall, and filled the ſpace marked BB. This was not difficult to draw; it was lifted almoſt without reſiſtance, after which there

was

was a free entrance to this myſterious and well defended hall. This place, marked DD in the plate, has a flat roof, compoſed of nine ſtones. The ſeven middle ones are four feet wide by more than ſixteen long, ſince, on either hand, they reſt upon the two walls which run from Eaſt to Weſt, and are at ſixteen feet diſtance from each other. Two feet only of the width of each of the other two ſtones which are by the ſide of theſe are viſible; the remainder is concealed in the walls on which their extremities reſt. I leave to conjecture what may have been found in this hall. Hiſtory, which undertakes to tranſmit to poſterity only the memory of laudable actions, or of ſuch as ought to be avoided, does not wiſh to perpetuate the recollection of outrages againſt nature, ſince they carry their own horror with them. Thus, burying in oblivion the name of the impious wretch who laid his ſacrilegious hands upon this tomb, ſhe wiſhes alſo to leave us in ignorance of the ſecret of its contents. At this day, however, of all that might have been contained in this

apartment

apartment, there remains only a caſe of marble granite *(b)*, ſeven or eight feet long, by four wide, and as many high. It has been depoſited when this place was ſhut at the top, and remains now, only becauſe it could not be moved without breaking, and that it would thereby be rendered of no uſe. This caſe had a lid, as one may ſee from the form of its edges, but it has been broken off in moving it, and there are now no traces of it. It was undoubtedly this caſe which contained the body of the king, encloſed in two or three boxes of precious wood, agreeable to the cuſtom in uſe amongſt the great. It is alſo highly probable that this hall contained many other caſes beſides that of the prince, eſpecially of perſons buried with him in the ſame tomb, as it were, to keep him com-

(b) It appears to me that this Sarcophagus was of yellowiſh marble, like that of the firſt ſtone at the entrance of the exterior paſſage. A naturaliſt who ſhould examine theſe different marbles, and thoſe which were taken from Mount Colzoum, a few leagues from the ſpot where the monaſtery of St. Antony is built, would furniſh the ſtrongeſt degree of evidence.

pany. In fact, when the body of the king, who built this pyramid, was depoſited in this ſuperb mauſoleum, ſeveral living perſons, deſtined never to come out of it, and to be buried alive with their prince, were introduced there at the ſame time; a fact which I cannot doubt of, after the convincing proof I have of it. It is on the following teſtimony, that I found my opinion: preciſely in the middle of this hall, which is 32 feet long, by 19 high, and 16 wide, one remarks two holes oppoſite to each other, elevated three feet and a half above the pavement. One which faces the north, is one foot long, by eight inches high, and goes in a right line to the outſide of the pyramid. This hole is now blocked up by ſtones, at five or ſix feet from its aperture. The other on the eaſtern ſide, at the ſame diſtance from the floor, is perfectly round, and is ſpacious enough to admit the two fiſts. It then widens to the ſize of a foot in diameter, and continuing to deſcend, loſes itſelf in the bottom of the pyramid. Theſe two holes are marked by the letter C. I think, and

I hope

I hope every ſenſible man will think with me, that both one and the other of them could have no other uſe than to ſerve the perſons ſhut up in this tomb with the body of the prince. The firſt was deſigned to give them air. It was through this alſo they received their food, and every thing they ſtood in need of; for which purpoſe they were doubtleſs provided with a long caſket, proportioned to the ſize of the paſſage. To this machine was faſtened a long cord, for the perſons ſhut up in the pyramid, by means of which they might draw it to them; and another, likewiſe connected with the machine, hung on the exterior ſide, ſo that the caſket might be reciprocally drawn from without. It was probably by this means that the perſons ſhut up in this edifice were ſupplied with neceſſaries as long as any of them remained alive. On entering it I ſuppoſe that each of them was furniſhed with a coffin to be buried in, and that they ſucceſſively rendered each other this laſt pious duty, until the laſt, who muſt want that ſuccour his companions had derived from

himſelf and the others. The ſecond hole ſerved to empty dirt, which fell into a deep reſervoir made for that purpoſe. I intended to have made a ſearch without ſide the pyramid, at the place which correſponded with the oblong hole, and towards which there are two punctuated lines in the plate which repreſents the inſide of the building. Perhaps I ſhould there have found freſh proofs of what I have advanced; but beſides that this reſearch might have given umbrage to the powers of the country, who would not have failed to imagine that one was trying to diſcover ſome hidden treaſure, I thought it poſſible that this hole might terminate in ſome hollow of the external part, and was apprehenſive of finding its extremity wholly blocked up, either by the body of the pyramid, or at leaſt by the ſtones of the coating. From what I have ſaid, however, others may purſue the enquiry at the ſpot which correſponds with that aperture. By that there will be a full proof of the uſe of this hole, although it does not admit of a doubt with me, and ſeems

impoſſible

impoſſible to be accounted for in any other way.

After explaining with as much perſpicuity as the nature of the ſubject would allow, in what manner, and by what efforts the pyramid was opened, I ſhall clear up a doubt which the reader muſt have ſtarted on peruſing this firſt part.—— It remains to know where the magazine was placed for ſo many ſtones as were neceſſarily employed in blocking up the paſſages I have ſpoken of, and in what manner they were ſtopped by the workmen who afterwards came out from the inſide. This diſcuſſion is no doubt as curious as the reſt, and merits at leaſt, as much attention.

I have already obſerved, that in the benches which ran along each ſide of the paſſage of 124 feet, at the bottom of the gallery were mortices perpendicularly hewn, of a foot long, ſix inches wide, and eight deep. This may be ſeen at the letter Q. Theſe mortices perfectly correſponded with one another, and ran all the length of the benches at the diſtance of two feet

and a half. Theſe apertures had been contrived in building the gallery, ſo as to be able to place in each of them a piece of wood a foot ſquare, and three or four feet long, ſix inches of which were cut at the bottom to the height of eight fingers, according to the form and capacity of the mortices into which theſe joints were to enter. Theſe pieces of wood were to form a ſcaffold above, to ſupport the ſtones neceſſary to fill all the paſſages that remained to be blocked up in the inſide of the pyramid, and even this paſſage of 124 feet, marked F. which was at the bottom of the gallery. Theſe joints had another notch at their upper end; and long pieces of wood, in which mortices were cut, ſimilar to thoſe of the benches, being applied to theſe ſtakes, formed on each ſide of the gallery a reſting-place from top to bottom, to lay planks of ſix feet and a half long, half a foot thick, and properly diſpoſed, on which was placed the firſt row of ſtones. The benches roſe, as I have ſaid, two feet and a half from the floor of the gallery. I ſuppoſe that the ſcaffold was placed three

feet

feet higher than the benches; thus, from the bottom of the gallery to this ſcaffold there was an elevation of five feet and a half, which was ſufficient to let the workmen paſs upright.

I have already remarked in another place, that from the bottom of the paſſage to the roof of the gallery, there was 27 feet and a half elevation. From the bottom of the paſſage to the ſcaffold are reckoned ſix. From the ſcaffold upwards there remained therefore 21 feet and a half; ſo that lodging in that ſpace four rows of ſtones, three feet and a half high, ſuch as were neceſſary for filling the paſſages, there ſtill remained a void ſeven feet and a half high. But I will ſuppoſe that from the firſt row to the ſecond, was placed between the ſtones a plank about three inches thick, and a ſimilar one from the ſecond to the third, in order the more eaſily to withdraw the ſtones, by making them ſlide along the planks; in this caſe three rows of theſe ſtones would be ſufficient to fill all the cavities that were to be blocked up, and which are open at this day. It is poſſible

that there are other paſſages which have been blocked up, and never opened, in the body of the pyramid, ſince in the gallery, four, and even five rows of theſe ſtones might have been placed, if neceſſary. This is clear from the above calculation, and it is not probable that they would have made the gallery more lofty than was neceſſary; which would proportionably weaken the whole body of the edifice.

Let us confine ourſelves, however, to the paſſages which are known, and have been violently opened; let us keep to the quantity of ſtones with which they certainly were filled, and which have been broken, except three feet and a half, or four feet of the ſame ſtones which remain at the place marked F. in the plate, and which cloſe at this day the entrance of the upper paſſage, correſponding with the firſt. This firſt paſſage B. I call the exterior paſſage, becauſe it has been cloſed from without, whereas the others have been filled from the inſide even of the pyramid, and from the magazine placed in the gallery. Now, I maintain that three

rows

rows of ſtones were ſufficient to fill all the paſſages, and it is eaſy to prove this by the detail.

It was firſt neceſſary to have thirteen feet and a half of ſtones, to fill the paſſages leading to the royal hall, and which was on a level with the platform at the upper end of the gallery. They firſt let down therefore from the ſcaffold on the eſplanade marked R, a ſtone of ſix feet, and puſhed it into this paſſage as far as the entrance of the hall, into the place marked B. B. where it was ſtopped by the pavement of the hall, which was two fingers higher than the bottom of the paſſage. They then let down on the paſſage the ſix feet ſtone I have ſpoken of, ſuſpended in the ſpace Z. As ſoon, in ſhort, as the workmen could get out of the cavity it occupied, by the aperture V. and that this aperture was ſhut, they let down two other ſtones of ſeven feet and a half, from the ſcaffold, by means of which this paſſage, which is only nineteen feet long, was completely filled.

It

It muſt be ſuppoſed, that to facilitate the execution of theſe works, they had faſtened to the wall at the bottom of the gallery which terminates the platform, and over againſt the ſtones ranged on the ſcaffold, a ſtrong iron crutch, with a ſubſtantial pulley, by the aid of which the workmen placed on the platform, could, with a ſtrong rope, draw the ſtones from off the ſcaffold one after the other, and let them down on the platform itſelf; that then, on the ſide theſe ſtones preſented to the workmen, they made a ſquare hole, three or four fingers deep, and wider below than above, and had ſunk two pieces of iron into this ſquare aperture, thicker below than above, furniſhed at their extremity with two good rings, and ſeparated from one another by a wedge of iron. By means of theſe contrivances they had a ſure hold to draw the ſtones from off the ſcaffold with the rope which paſſed through the two rings, to ſuſpend them by a pulley, and drop them gently at length on the eſplanade or platform, from whence they

they were conveyed without much difficulty to the place of their deſtination.

After thus filling the firſt paſſage, they laboured to cloſe up that of 118 feet, marked in the plate N. This paſſage led, as I have ſaid, into the firſt hall, where the body of the queen was probably depoſited. It will be found at the letter O. It was not difficult to accompliſh this work; after which, as many ſtones were brought as were neceſſary, as well to cover the entrance of this paſſage, and to level the groove L, as to fill the platform of 10 feet, forming the triangle I have mentioned, marked L M, at the entrance of the gallery. They further took one hundred feet of theſe ſame ſtones to ſhut up the whole ſpace of the paſſage H, by which the pyramid has been forced, and which is totally diſfigured for the length of 80 feet. In ſhort, they ſucceeded in letting down 124 feet of them, by means of which the paſſage marked P, at the bottom of the gallery between the benches, and over which the ſcaffold was raiſed, was completely cloſed. It muſt be obſerved, however, that the laſt ſtone, which ſhut this paſſage, could not entirely

entirely advance, on account of an elevation of four or five fingers at the extremity of this paſſage, as I have already remarked; and it is not omitted in the plate.

What I have juſt ſaid of the contrivances for ſhutting all the paſſages in the pyramid, and of the intention of the gallery, will appear perhaps novel, and bold enough to tempt ſome critic to treat it as a chimera, or at leaſt as a conjecture; nor do I by any means exact an implicit confidence in this article. I ſhall not be denied the honour at leaſt of having firſt imagined a very probable ſyſtem, capable of elucidating at the firſt glance, wonders which have remained in perfect obſcurity until this day. But I go farther, and venture to advance, that it is impoſſible for any perſon who will pay attention to the connection and concluſion of my obſervations on this ſubject, not to allow that my conjectures, ſhould it pleaſe critics ſo to call them, are ſo well founded, that it is impoſſible not to look upon them as real truths. As for myſelf, after ſo many reſearches, after all the reflexions I have made on the interior diſpoſition of the pyramid,

ramid, I boldly declare, that it is not poſſible things ſhould have been otherwiſe than I have deſcribed them. I know, in the firſt inſtance, that it never was poſſible, after the pyramid was finiſhed, that is to ſay, after the grooves were formed, and the gallery was roofed, to make any ſtone enter into that gallery large enough to cloſe the paſſages from within. I ſee on the contrary, that the attention of the architect has only been occupied to prevent thoſe he had ſhut in there from being drawn out, in order one day to cloſe it, in ſuch a manner, as to be inviſible. I diſcover the deſign of the ſame architect in the long groove at the bottom of the gallery. I conceive alſo that it was only contrived for the conveyance of the ſtones which might ſome day or other cloſe the interior paſſage; and I judge from the ſtay which is at the upper end of this groove, that it was itſelf to be filled with ſtones as ſoon as the paſſage ſhould be completely blocked. The fine poliſh of this groove confirms me in my opinion of this double uſe of it. I obſerve that its length is proportioned to that of the interior paſ-

ſage.

ſage. I perceive that this paſſage is ſtill partly ſhut, that is to ſay, at the place that forms the angle with the exterior canal. I can even diſcover that they have not penetrated into the pyramid by this true paſſage, but, that on the contrary, they have been obliged to clear out a falſe route, by which falling in with one of the ſides of the paſſage, they could more eaſily work at the ſtones with which it was filled. I ſince find it disfigured, through its whole length, which convinces me that they were obliged to have recourſe to violence to open it. I conclude, therefore, from its being ſo disfigured as far as the entrance of the gallery, that the ſtones which cloſed it muſt have been broken in the paſſage itſelf, and that in a ſpace of 124 feet, there were in the groove, and behind theſe ſtones, 415 feet of other ſtones continually ready to ſucceed to thoſe made uſe of in the paſſage, and to fill the vacancy they might leave. I even ſuſpect that they who violated the pyramid knew of this collection of ſtones ſhut up within the groove. Had they been entirely ignorant of them, they would have

contented

contented themſelves no doubt, with breaking the ſtones the paſſage was filled with, at the aperture they had made; this operation would have been eaſier for them, and it was only from the knowledge they had of the ſtones, which were ready to ſlip from the groove into the paſſage, in proportion as they emptied it, that they adopted another method.

I have already hinted that there may be other paſſages cloſed up, and undiſcovered in the body of the pyramid, and it is poſſibly not without foundation, that reſearches have been made after them. Unfortunately, theſe have been ill directed, in attempting to diſcover them at the bottom of the two halls. If, beſides thoſe already known, there be ſtill any other paſſage within the pyramid, the reſearch ought unqueſtionably to be made between the two halls; and the entrance of ſuch a paſſage can be no where but towards the middle of the groove.

I muſt take notice likewiſe, that the points in the plate near the letter M, mark certain hollows formed purpoſely at the time of the conſtruction of the pyramid.

Theſe

Theſe hollows were meant to ſerve by way of ladder to thoſe who from the paſſage of 118 feet, which leads to the firſt hall, wiſhed to mount towards the top of the gutter, (which, as I have ſaid, was interrupted in this place,) or who wanted to deſcend into the ſame paſſage. I have already obſerved, that from the bottom of the groove, a man might paſs upright under the ſcaffold. There was undoubtedly on each ſide of the gallery, and from top to bottom under the ſcaffolding, ropes tied at intervals, to the beams which ſupported it, in order to give the perſons who wiſhed to go up into, or come down from the groove, the facility of doing it without ſlipping. They ſerved the workmen in the firſt inſtance, in the conſtruction of the gallery, and in cloſing the paſſages. They who have ſince viſited the halls, they who conveyed thither the bodies of the king and queen, ſuch perſons, in ſhort, as mounted into the royal chamber with the prince's coffin, to die near him, have availed themſelves of the ſame aſſiſtance.

There is no doubt, therefore, that by means of ſtones placed on the ſcaffold, they had

had ſhut and opened all the paſſages formed in the interior of the pyramid.

After putting the laſt hand to all theſe works, nothing remained for the workmen but to get out of it, unleſs we ſuppoſe they began by breaking the ſcaffold and the pieces of wood it was compoſed of, and which they conveyed out in fragments by the way contrived for their retreat.

This was no other than the well I have ſpoken of, which is on the right hand entering the gallery. This well at the lower part of its entrance, occupies a part of the bench, and riſes to the height of two feet in the wall. It is, as I have ſaid, almoſt round or oval, and is marked in the plate I.

This well deſcends towards the bottom of the pyramid by a line perpendicular with the horizon, ſlanting however a little, and forms the figure of a ſpit, or Hebrew *Lamed*. This may be ſeen in the plan I have given of the pyramid. About ſixty feet from the aperture, one meets with a ſquare window in this paſſage, from whence one enters into a ſmall grotto, hewn out of the mountain, which in this place is not of ſo-

lid ſtone, but of a ſort of gravel, the grains of which are ſtrongly attached to each other. This grotto extends from eaſt to weſt, and may be about fifteen feet long; one then meets with another groove, hollowed alſo out of the rock, very much on the ſlant, nay, almoſt perpendicular. It is two feet four inches wide, by two and a half high. It deſcends through a ſpace of one hundred and twenty-three feet; after which nothing is to be met with but ſand and ſtones thrown there deſignedly, or which have fallen of themſelves. I am convinced that this paſſage has never had any other deſtination than to ſerve as a retreat for the labourers who worked at the pyramid. The ſlope of this conduit, its winding road, its ſmallneſs, and its depth are certain proofs of it. I make no doubt even, that the way out of this well, which one could not arrive at until many other windings, perhaps even not without mounting towards its mouth; I make no doubt, I ſay, that this way out was formed by a paſſage, above which hung a row of ſtones, which they had diſcovered the ſecret of

ſuſpending,

ſuſpending, and which falling down into the paſſage, by the means of ſome ſpring they ſet in motion, ſhut up the entrance for ever, as ſoon as the workmen were withdrawn from the pyramid. We do not, in fact, diſcover that they have tried to force that aperture, owing either to their ignorance of it, or to its ſmallneſs, which would not allow them to work. The pyramid has not been aſſailed but by the royal route, which ſerved no doubt to convey the body of the king, and of all the perſons dead or living, who were to be buried with him. It was alſo by this way certainly that the attendants of the funeral penetrated even to the interior of the building, and returned from it after rendering the laſt duties to the prince, and depoſiting his corpſe in the mauſoleum he himſelf had choſen.

It muſt not be imagined, however, that all the perſons who worked at this great edifice, were acquainted with the ſecrets of the inſide of it, nor even that nothing more was neceſſary to acquire ſuch knowledge, but to have entered the pyramid after it was finiſhed, and before it was cloſed. This

myſtery was reſerved to the architects alone who had the management of this ſuperb monument, or at leaſt, to a very few perſons ſelected to work under their directions, in forming the paſſages I have ſpoken of in my deſcription of this pyramid. It is highly probable even, that the workmen deſtined to this particular buſineſs, were not mercenary beings, capable of betraying a ſecret of that nature for any conſideration. They were, doubtleſs, all perſons choſen amongſt the moſt opulent, and the perſons moſt attached to the king in the different branches of workmanſhip ſupported by him, and on whoſe zeal, probity, gratitude, and religion they could ſafely rely. I ſhould even readily believe, that the prince might himſelf have named them before his death, and have ſecured them a quiet, convenient, and honourable retreat in theſe temples, *(d)* enriched with the donations of thoſe ſovereigns, which muſt neceſſarily have been

(d) Before the pyramids one ſees the ruins of ancient edifices, which were temples probably, where offerings were made for the princes, whoſe bodies were depoſited in theſe ſuperb mauſolea.

beſtowed

beſtowed on perſons employed in edifices of this ſort, and which, in fact, accompanied them, as I have already demonſtrated.

Such is the opinion of Mr. Maillet on the ſubject of the inſide of the great pyramid. After examining it twice, with his book in my hand, I could not help admiring the juſtneſs of his obſervations. The means he ſuppoſes to have been employed in cloſing the paſſages appear probable to me, and it is certain that they have been cleared in the manner he deſcribes.

Some Arabian authors pretend that it was the thirſt after wealth, which induced the Caliph *Mahmoud*, towards the beginning of the eighth century, to violate this ancient monument. He expected to find treaſures there; but he was deceived in his expectations. Some golden idols which accompanied the king's mummy, were the ſole fruit of ſeveral years labour, and immenſe expences. Other oriental writers attribute this undertaking to the famous caliph *Aaroun el Raſchid*, who lived in the time of Charlemagne, to whom he ſent a water-clock, the firſt that had been ſeen in

France. This prince, who patronized the ſciences, and had the beſt Greek and Roman authors tranſlated into Arabic, was curious of knowing the inſide of that aſtoniſhing edifice, and made them open it. Without deciding reſpecting theſe different opinions, it is beyond a doubt that the violation of this pyramid was executed under the government of the Arabs.

It is alſo an unqueſtionable fact, that it ſerved as a mauſoleum to an Egyptian Pharaoh. The tombs diſperſed over the plain at the end of which it is built, the ſarcophagus of the great hall, the niche in the lower one, the teſtimony of Herodotus, and of Strabo, that of the Arabian hiſtorians, every thing proves the truth of this opinion. I know that Mr. Paw, *(e)* who, from the receſſes of his cloſet ſees every thing better than all the travellers, tells them, that this pyramid was the *tomb of Oſiris*. But he ſtands ſingle in this opinion, which is belied by facts and hiſtory. Whilſt I do juſtice

(e) Recherches philoſophiques ſur les Egyptiens & Chinois, p. 50.

to the knowledge of this learned man, I cannot avoid correcting the errors he has committed reſpecting the dietetic ſyſtem of the Egyptians, and the climate of the country, in the courſe of theſe letters.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XIX.

Deſcription of the other pyramids; the adjacent country; the grotto of Santo; the great Sphinx, with an account of its mythology, and the return to Giza.

To Mr. L. M.

Giſa.

I Have laid before you, Sir, the ancient and modern enquiries on the ſubject of the great pyramid, to which I have added ſuch obſervations as occurred to me from the preſence of the objects; I hope they will give you a ſatisfactory idea of it, and ſave you the trouble of reading a number of volumes, the attentive peruſal of which might only augment your doubts, as long as you do not go yourſelf to examine it more minutely on the ſpot. I will own to you, Sir, that after meditating on the deſcriptions which have appeared of theſe ancient monuments, I found it impoſſible to

to adopt any fixed opinion, and I remained in a painful uncertainty. The truth I ſought after was hid in the obſcurity of ſo many different opinions, that the more I ſtudied, the leſs I was informed. I flatter myſelf, however, to have diſcovered it ſince at the foot of the pyramid, in the gloomy receſſes of its interior, and on its lofty ſummit; the torch of reflexion has always guided my footſteps: may it alſo have directed my pen, and produced conviction in your mind; for in matters of ſcience, to doubt, is to be in torment.

(f) Herodotus informs us that the expence of building it, in the article of vegetables

(f) "One ſees Egyptian characters engraved on "the marble of the pyramid, which inform us how "much it coſt in onions, and other vegetables, for "the food of the workmen only who laboured at it. "The prieſt who interpreted theſe hieroglyphics to "me, told me that the expence of this article alone "amounted to 1600 talents. *Herodotus, Euterpe.*"

This ſum may appear chimerical to a perſon who calculates in his cabinet; but the obſerver who has ſeen this mountain, built with large pieces of rocks, is not aſtoniſhed at it. This paſſage proves that in the moſt diſtant ages, as well as at the preſent day, vegetables

vegetables only, for feeding the workmen, was inſcribed in Egyptian characters on the marble of the great pyramid. Theſe hieroglyphics have periſhed with the covering, but were they even remaining, as they do ſtill ſubſiſt in a thouſand places in Egypt, theſe characters no longer would convey to us the thought. At this day they are mute traces, as inſenſible as the ſtone they are engraved on. Muſt then a language, the knowledge of which would teach us the hiſtory of ancient Egypt, and caſt a ray of light through the darkneſs which covered the firſt ages of the world, lie buried with the prieſts who invented it!

It is time, Sir, to reſume the ſequel of our journey. After obſerving every thing intereſting, we went to ſee the ſecond pyramid, which appeared almoſt as lofty as the firſt. Strabo ſays they are of the ſame height. Diodorus Siculus is of the ſame opinion, but thinks that the baſe of the ſecond is not ſo wide *(g)*. This hiſtorian

vegetables conſtituted the principal part of the food of the Egyptians.

(g) Diodorus Siculus, lib. i. ſect. 2.

aſcribes

aſcribes the building of it to *Cephren*, brother and ſucceſſor of *Chemmis*, who built that I have been giving an account of. The coating of this pyramid is deſtroyed in many places, but the holes effected by force proclaim that this injury is the work of men, and not produced by the ravages of time. All the upper part, for ſixty feet downwards, is quite perfect, becauſe it was doubtleſs the moſt difficult to be carried off. Perhaps they who attempted to violate this ancient mauſoleum, diſcouraged by the length and difficulties of ſo expenſive an undertaking, contented themſelves with taking away the marble it was covered with.

To the eaſt of theſe two pyramids is a third, which appears very diminutive, compared with the other two. It is, however, about three hundred feet ſquare *(b)*. It was built by *Micerinus*. Deſirous of emulating the glory of his father Chemmis, he intended covering it with Thebaic mar-

(b) Strabo, lib. 17.

ble,

ble *(i)*, with that beautiful marble, with black ſpots, whoſe fine grain and extreme hardneſs enables it to receive the moſt perfect poliſh. This prince died when the work was only half finiſhed. The beauty of the marble has tempted the Arabs to tear it off. Some pieces of it are ſtill in their places, and its ruins around the baſe. The name of *Micerinus (k)* was inſcribed on the north ſide of it. It has undergone the fate of the hieroglyphics of the great pyramid, which have been carried off with the covering.

Hiſtorians relate many fables on the ſubject of this pyramid. According to ſome of them, a famous courtezan built it with the produce of her gallantries; others ſay,

(i) The quarries of this beautiful marble are ſituated at the extremity of Egypt, in the mountain, at the foot of which Sienna was built. There are three ſorts of it; the firſt of a perfect black; the ſecond is only ſpotted with it; and the laſt is ſpeckled with red. The granite of the two former kinds was employed in the conſtruction of the tombs. The other was made uſe of for columns and obeliſks.

(k) Diodorus Siculus, lib. i. ſect. 2.

that

that an eagle having carried off the ſlipper of the beautiful Rhodope, who had come to Naucrates, let it fall at Memphis; that Pharaoh, charmed with the delightful ſhape of it, was deſirous of ſeeing the female model; that falling in love with the charming Greek, he married her, and raiſed this pyramid in her honour. The Arabs, fond of the marvellous, have greedily adopted theſe childiſh tales, and beſtowed on this pyramid the name of *Heram elbent*, *The ancient edifice of the girl.* Round this monument are the ruins of *(l)* three other ſmall pyramids, which were built, according to Diodorus Siculus, to ſerve as mauſolea for the queens of thoſe ſovereigns who built the great ones.

Facing the ſecond pyramid, on the eaſtern ſide, is the enormous ſphynx, whoſe whole body, as I have obſerved, is buried in the ſand. The top of its back only is viſible, which is more than one hundred feet long. It is of one ſingle

(l) Salah Eddin demoliſhed them, and employed the ſtones in building the walls of Cairo, and of the caſtle on mount Mokattam.

ſtone,

ſtone, making part of the rock on which the pyramids are placed. Its head riſes about twenty-ſeven feet above the ſand. The Arabs, inſpired by Mahomet with a horror for all repreſentations of men and animals, have diſfigured its face with arrows and lances *(m)*. Pliny pretends that the body of Amaſis was depoſited within this monſter. Several others think that the well of the great pyramid led to it, and that the prieſts reſorted thither at certain times to pronounce their oracles *(n)*. But theſe are mere conjectures.

Mr. Paw *(o)* ſays that the ſphinxes found in Egypt, compoſed of the body of a virgin grafted on that of a lion, are images of the divinity who was repreſented as a hermaphrodite. This explanation appears to me not more fortunate than that

(m) Pliny the naturaliſt.

(n) They adduce, in proof of this, a hole placed at the top of the ſphinx's head, from whence the prieſts delivered their oracles; but this hole is only five feet deep, and communicates neither with the mouth, nor with the inſide of the monſter.

(o) Recherches philoſophiques ſur les Egyptiens et les Chinois.

of

of his *Tomb of Oſiris*. It is under the ſign of the Lion and of the Virgin that the Nile ſwells, overflows its banks, and gives fertility to Egypt. The ſphynx was an hieroglyphic, which taught the people the period of the moſt important event of the whole year. We ſee accordingly, that they were multiplied without end. They are to be ſeen before all their temples, before all their remarkable monuments. This hieroglyphic was equivalent to the following phraſe: *People, under this ſign, at ſuch a time, the river ſhall overflow your fields, and bring you fertility.*

Whilſt we were admiring the wonders of ancient Egypt, and that Mr. Adanſon, the king's firſt interpreter at Alexandria, was occupied in drawing them, we ſaw ten Arabs coming towards us full gallop, with lances in their hands. They came within piſtol-ſhot of us, with the intention of attacking, or exacting a contribution from us. We were armed with fuſils and piſtols, and every way prepared to repulſe them; but at the firſt diſcharge we ſhould have had a whole hord of them upon us.

We

We commiſſioned our two Cheiks therefore to ſpeak to them, who ſtated, that we were their gueſts, and under their protection. This word alone diſarmed them, for they reſpect infinitely the rights of hoſpitality. They diſmounted, and offered to accompany us wherever we wiſhed to go. As they are not fond however of taking trouble for nothing, they politely aſked us for ſome ſmall pieces of money, which we gave them. After we had ratified our peace with this ſmall preſent, I heard them ſay in a low voice; "Let us viſit the "ſaint;" whither they went, and I followed them. They paſſed the whole length of the ſecond pyramid, and ſtopped at the entrance of a grotto cut out of the rock. They took off their ſhoes and ſtockings, and went in. I was the only European who followed their example. The grotto was ſpacious, neat, and handſome, and one breathed in it a moſt agreeable coolneſs. At one of the extremities was a niche ſix feet high, before which hung a tattered curtain, full of holes. The Arabs ſtood near it with a moſt reſpectful air.

air. Each of them in his turn knelt and kiſſed a foot which ſtretched itſelf out from behind the curtain. I perceived through the holes, that there was a naked man who gave them his foot to kiſs. When my turn was come, I approached, and ſaid to him: O! great ſaint, diſcover your face to me! He took my compliment for an inſult, and concluding from my pronunciation that I was not an Arab, he anſwered ſharply: *Roub anni ia kelb: Get you gone from me, dog.* At theſe words all the Muſſulmen darted a furious look at me. I made a precipitate retreat, congratulating myſelf that my indiſcretion had only coſt me a hard word; and I determined to have no further converſation with Egyptian ſantons.

Theſe men are vagabonds, who affect a total alienation from all worldly goods, and who live on public alms. They commit a thouſand extravagancies, which make them paſs for inſpired perſons. They go abſolutely naked into the middle of towns, and violating every rule of decency, do not

bluſh to commit publicly actions, which the reſt of mankind cover with the obſcurity of night, or with the veil of myſtery (p). I cannot expreſs to you to what a degree the populace carry their veneration for theſe brazen-faced cynics. The women, above all, naturally timid and modeſt, forget, for them, that reſerve and baſhfulneſs which ought to be the inſeparable companions of their ſex, and that men who impudently abandon themſelves to all the appetites of nature, never can have any claim to ſuch reſpect.

When we were ſatiated with ſeeing and admiring, we returned to Giſa, where we paſſed ſome days in viſiting its environs. In our route we met with ſeveral jackalls, which were running with great ſwiftneſs towards the hills. Theſe wild animals, of

(p) A friend writes me from Tunis that a ſcene of this ſort paſſed in the middle of the ſquare of that town, between a ſanton and a woman. The people ſurrounded with a reſpectful air the temporary married couple; and an European who ſhould have ventured a pleaſantry at the ſight of this ſpectacle, would have run the riſk of being ſtoned to death.

the

the size of a dog, have a hanging tail, and a pointed muzzle. They live on prey procured by hunting, and eat fish on the banks of the lakes. The Arabs call them *Dib*. They are the African wolf.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XX.

Deſcription of Giza, the ancient ſuburb of Foſtat. Refutation of the authors who ſuppoſe it to be the ſame with Memphis. A charming view of the Nile; the iſland of Raouda, Old Cairo, and the boats which are conſtantly paſſing along the river; with an account of the manufacture of ſal ammoniac.

To Mr. L. M.

Giſa.

GISA, as you have ſeen, Sir, is a ſmall town governed by a *Kiachef*. It takes its origin from the choice the governors of the caliphs made of *Maſr Foſtat* to be their ſeat of reſidence. The ancients, who have deſcribed with preciſion the environs of the pyramids, ſay nothing of Giſa, which was founded by the Arabs, as its name beſpeaks *(q)*. Mr. Shaw miſtakes, in placing it

(q) Gizé ſignifies *angle, extremity*, in Arabic. It was ſo called, becauſe at the time that *Maſr Foſtat* flouriſhed,

it on the ſite of Memphis. Beſides that there exiſt no ruins, no ancient monument, the Greeks, the Romans, and above all the Arabs, have pointed out ſo accurately the ſituation of the ancient capital of Egypt, that it is impoſſible, on reading them attentively, to be miſtaken. I propoſe to give you, in the following letter, proofs of what I avdance.

Giſa is ſurrounded by immenſe plains, where vegetables, flax, and corn grow in abundance. The *chartame*, improperly called *ſafranum* by the people of Provence, is cultivated there. They purchaſe the flowers of it, cargoes of which are ſent to Marſeilles. It is employed in dying the cloths of Languedoc. The Egyptians, who are in want of wood, burn the ſtalk of it for fuel. The pod contains a ſeed, from which

flouriſhed, Giſé, which was only ſeparated from it by the Nile, formed one of its ſuburbs. In the account given by Macrizi of the deſcent of Saint Lewis in Egypt, in ſpeaking of the *extremity* of Damietta, he ſays, The *Giza* of Damietta.

is extracted an oil, called *Zeit helou*, ſweet oil. It has an inſipid taſte, and is eaten by the people; but the rich only make uſe of it in their illuminations, which are frequent in Egypt.

This little town has a manufacture of ſal ammoniac. I have frequently gone into the laboratory, and, in ſpite of a horrible, infectious ſmoke, I have followed the proceſs of its manufacture. Figure to yourſelf ſome arches with parallel ſlits, to receive globes of glaſs, the necks of which are only two inches long, and the ſame in diameter. Before they are placed, they are covered with a fat earth, with which alſo all the interſtices between them are cloſed up. The body of the veſſels is contained within the vault, and they are ſupported by walls. The neck alone is expoſed to the action of the open air. Theſe balloons are filled with ſoot collected from the chimneys of the common people, who burn nothing but the dung of animals dried in the ſun, and mixed with chopped ſtraw. The fire which is lighted below is of the ſame materials.

rials. It is kept burning three days and three nights. The vaſes remain open, and the ſteam which exhales from the heated ſoot gradually adheres to the neck of the bottle. It there condenſes, cryſtallizes, and forms a brilliant and ſolid maſs of about two inches thick. When the operation is finiſhed, the vaſe is broken, the aſhes are thrown away, and the cake of ſal ammoniac is taken off, ſuch as it is ſent to Europe. Previous to this, however, a black cruſt is detached from the lower part of it, which has not acquired the proper degree of perfection. The globes which are filled with this on a ſecond operation, give the moſt perfect, and the moſt eſteemed ſal ammoniac. About two thouſand quintals a year are manufactured in different places in the country. It is a conſiderable article of commerce between the Egyptians and the Europeans. The tinners, the goldſmiths, the founders, and the chymiſts make uſe of it in their preparations.

The French merchants ſettled at Grand Cairo have a country-houſe at Giſa, with a ſmall garden planted with orange, lemon, and date-trees. It is ſituated on the banks of the Nile. From the windows one has a view of the beautiful iſle of *Raouda*, and its perfumed groves, the Mekias, againſt which the waters of the river daſh with violence; Old Cairo, ſurrounded with gardens, and a crowd of boats perpetually croſſing from one ſhore to the other. Various cluſters of verdure, between which appear houſes, and moſques, or the tops only of the minarets, preſent moſt delightful points of view. One paſſes delicious hours in contemplating theſe gay objects; for whilſt one is thus amuſed, the coolneſs ariſing from the current of air which follows the courſe of the Nile, invigorates the ſenſes, and gives the mind that energy it ſtands in need of to feel the beautiful, and enjoy every thing around it. It is to Giſa, therefore, that the French, ſuffocated by the heats of Grand Cairo, and the reverberation of the burning ſands of Mokattam,

kattam, come to refreſh themſelves after their buſineſs. It is to Giſa that they come to recover their health, and to reſpire life in a pure, freſh air, impregnated with aromatic exhalations from plants and flowers.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

An inquiry into the true ſituation of ancient Memphis, confirmed by the teſtimony of Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny, and Arabian writers; with a refutation of the modern travellers who affirm this capital to have been at Giza. Deſcription of the city as it was in the time of Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus; its temples, palaces, and lakes. A paſſage in Abulfeda, proving that it was demoliſhed by Amrou. The ruins which are now to be ſeen in the neighbourhood of the village of Menph, the ſmall remains of the ancient Memphis.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

IT is time, Sir, to ſpeak of Memphis, and to diſcuſs the opinions of different writers on the ſubject of that celebrated city, which are very oppoſite. Some of theſe pretend that it was ſituated where Giſa now ſtands, others place it five leagues fur-

ther

ther to the ſouthward. Is it not aſtoniſhing that the poſition of the ancient capital of Egypt, of a city which was ſeven leagues in circumference *(r)*, which contained magnificent temples and palaces, which art exerted herſelf to render everlaſting, ſhould at this day be a ſubject of diſpute amongſt the learned? Thus are all the monuments of man in their turn buried in the duſt! I hope, however, that the evidence of hiſtory will ſtill point out the traces which Memphis has left behind her, and diſſipate that darkneſs, with which erudition itſelf has laboured to cover them: Let us examine the paſſages.

" It was queen Semiramis who built " the caſtle *(s)* of Grand Cairo. She " placed there a numerous garriſon of Ba- " bylonians, in order to keep Memphis " in awe, ſituated oppoſite to it, to the

(r) Diodorus Siculus makes it 150 ſtadia round, lib. i. ſect. 2.

(s) I think I have corrected the firſt of theſe errors, in the 7th letter, by ſhewing that it was built by *Salah Eddin*.

" weſt-

" westward of the Nile, and to prevent " that capital from revolting *(t)*."

Doctor Shaw is of the ſame opinion.

" Oppoſite to Cairo, on the bank of the " Nile, which looks towards Lybia, is " the village of Giſa, where the ancient " Memphis ſtood, the ruins of which " are now buried and covered with " earth *(u)*."

Pocock, an accurate obſerver, then follows; inſtructed by the inſpection of the places, and ancient literature, he declares himſelf of a different opinion *(x)*. War was declared between the Engliſh literati; and the authors of the *Modern Univerſal Hiſtory* have pronounced the following decree:

" Memphis *(y)* was ſituated on the " ſpot now occupied by Giſa; ſo Doctor " Shaw informs us, whoſe geographical

(t) Father Sicard, *Lettres Edifiantes*, p. 471.

(u) Geographical obſervations on Syria and on Egypt, p. 25.

(x) Deſcription of the Eaſt, lib. i. at the article of Memphis and the pyramids.

(y) Firſt part, p. 328.

" obſer-

" obſervations on Egypt and Arabia Pe-
" træa, the beſt ever made, ought to be
" preferred to all the deſcriptions of mo-
" dern travellers, as well for their truth,
" at leaſt their probability, as for erudi-
" tion, accuracy, and ſound criticiſm. . . .
" In one word, his book will maintain its
" reputation againſt the attacks of envy
" and of malice; it will ſtill live, when
" the publications of thoſe who have taken
" up the pen to imitate, or decry him,
" will be buried in oblivion, or at leaſt
" covered with the contempt they ſo juſt-
" ly merit."

This, Sir, is a very deſpotic judgment pronounced againſt every traveller who ſhall preſume to combat the opinion of Doctor Shaw. If the authors of the *Modern Univerſal Hiſtory* thought they might diſpenſe with reading the works of the *Ancients*, they ſhould at leaſt have had recourſe to the books of the *Arabian* geographers. Enlightened by their peruſal, they would have been cautious of maintaining a palpable error with ſo much emphaſis. Allow me to quote authorities.

" Memphis

" Memphis (z) is ſituated on the nar-
" roweſt ſpot in Egypt, on the weſtern
" bank of the Nile; a lake formed by the
" waters of the river ſurrounds it to the
" north and to the weſt."

This is a vague deſcription. To have marked the ſituation of Memphis in a deciſive manner, the lake muſt have exiſted in our days, and the valley of Egypt have been meaſured, to diſcover the narroweſt part (&). Strabo gives us more circumſtantial details.

" From the caſtle of Babylon (a) one
" diſcovers, on the other ſide of the Nile,
" the pyramids, which are near to Memphis.
" . . . . It is partly ſurrounded by lakes.
" The buildings which formed the palaces
" of the kings, are at preſent in ruins.
" They extended from the mountain as far
" as the plain where the city is built, and
" even to the banks of the lake. They

(z) Herodotus, Euterpe.

(&) Strabo, lib. 17.

(a) I have pointed out its ſituation near Old Cairo in the 8th letter.

" were

" were ſhaded by a ſacred wood. At " forty ſtadia from Memphis riſes a ſtony " hill, where a great number of pyramids " are built."

It is not ſurprizing that Strabo ſhould have diſcovered the pyramids from the caſtle of Babylon, ſince they are ſeen from the fortreſs which overtops Grand Cairo, and from a much greater diſtance. He adds, that they were near Memphis, on a hill which is only forty ſtadia, or a league and a quarter diſtance. This ſituation does not correſpond with that of Giſa, which is three leagues from the neareſt pyramids, and ſix from thoſe of Saccara. I ſhall not dwell on this deſcription, as Pliny *(b)* ſettles the difficulty, ſo as not to leave a doubt.

" The three great pyramids, which are " ſeen by navigators from all parts, are " ſituated on a barren and ſtony hill, be- " tween Memphis and the Delta, one " league from the Nile, two from Mem- " phis, and near the village of Buſiris."

(b) Pliny the naturaliſt, lib. 36.

This

This paſſage irrevocably fixes the diſputed places, and diſplays the truth in the cleareſt light. Since the pyramids, in fact, are between Memphis and the Delta, as it is certain that Giſa is between the pyramids and the Delta, it is impoſſible that Memphis could have been ſituated on the ſpot where Giſa ſtands; or, which comes to the ſame thing, Memphis, in Pliny's deſcription, is two leagues to the ſouthward of the pyramids; now the town of Giſa is three leagues diſtant from them to the northward, it could not therefore be built on the ground occupied by Memphis. Nor can Pliny be accuſed of having been deceived, for the poſitions he has laid down are extremely accurate. The village of *Buſiris* ſtill exiſts under the name of *Bouſir*, at a ſmall diſtance from the pyramids; they are ſtill a league from the river; and the ſmall town of *Menph*, formerly Memphis, is about two leagues to the ſouthward of theſe monuments. Had the authors of the *Modern Univerſal Hiſtory* read this paſſage, they would have been careful not to put implicit faith in aſſertions, nor blindly

blindly to adopt an opinion ſubject to criticiſm, more eſpecially as one of their countrymen *(c)*, a judicious and enlightened obſerver, had already diſputed it. Above all, they would not have thundered out their anathema againſt whoever refuſes to embrace the creed of Doctor Shaw. With them I do homage to the merits of that learned man; his book is replete with valuable enquiries; but as ſome errors have crept in amongſt the truths he has eſtabliſhed, I cannot help correcting them when occaſion offers.

After a king of Egypt had turned the courſe of the Nile *(d)*, which loſt itſelf in the ſands of Lybia, and that the Delta was formed out of the mud *(e)* depoſited by its waters, canals were cut to drain

(c) Pocock, journey to the Eaſt.

(d) See the firſt letter.

(e) Should even the evidence of hiſtory, which proves that the Delta originates only in the ſand and mud depoſited by the Nile, no longer exiſt; ſhould we even reject the opinions of Herodotus, of Strabo, of Diodorus Siculus, of Pliny, &c. who all of them aſſert the fact, it would be impoſſible not to admit it,

drain the lower Egypt. The monarchs, who, till then, had fixed their reſidence at Thebes, were deſirous of coming nearer the mouth of the river, to enjoy a more temperate air, and to be more ready to defend the entrance of their empire. They founded the city of Memphis, and ſtrove to make it a rival worthy of the ancient capital. They adorned it with ſeveral temples *(f)*, amongſt which that of Vulcan attracted the attention of travellers. The grandeur, the ſumptuouſneſs of the edifice, the richneſs of its ornaments, alternately excited admiration. On the ſide of the barren plain was raiſed another temple, not leſs an object of wonder, dedicated to Serapis. An avenue of prodigious ſphinxes ornamented the principal approach. The

on conſidering this beautiful part of Egypt. One ſees, in fact, throughout its whole extent, no other ſtones than ſuch as have been brought thither for the building of temples and great edifices; and on digging twenty feet deep in any part of it whatever, nothing is to be found but the black mud of the Nile, mixed with ſand.

(f) Strabo, lib. 17.

ſands,

ſands, the ſcourge of Egypt, heaped up ſucceſſively around them, ſo that in the time of Strabo ſome were buried to the middle of the body, and others up to the head; at preſent they have totally diſappeared. To prevent this diſaſter, however, they had built to the ſouthward a long and lofty dyke *(g)*, which ſerved alſo as a rampart againſt the overflowings of the river, and the ſurprizes of the enemy. The king's palaces, and a fortreſs built on the mountain, defended it to the weſt. On the eaſt it was bounded by the Nile. To the northward were lakes terminated by the plain of mummies, and by the cauſeway which leads from Buſiris to the great pyramids. Thus ſituated, Memphis commanded the valley of Egypt, and communicated by canals with lake *Mæris*, and lake *Mareotis*. The citizen who inhabited it, from his own houſe could travel over all Egypt in a boat; it became accordingly the centre of wealth, of commerce, and the arts. Aſtronomy and geometry, invented

(g) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

by the Egyptians, flouriſhed there *(b)*. Thither the Greeks repaired to acquire that knowledge which they carried into, and brought to perfection in their own country. The new capital threw Thebes and her hundred gates into oblivion; and ſhe ſaw riſe upon her neighbouring mountain thoſe proud monuments, thoſe ſuperb mauſolea, which alone, of all the wonders that the world admired, have braved the ravages of time, and of ſtill more deſtructive man. The glory of Memphis laſted many ages. She maintained her ſplendor till Cambyſes laid waſte Egypt at the head of a formidable army. This ferocious conqueror deſtroyed, as far as he could, her temples and her famous buildings. Above all, he ſtrove to extinguiſh the torch of the ſciences, which this people, ſurrounded by waves and deſarts, had lighted in their fertile valley. The colleges of the prieſts, with a part of their privileges, loſt the knowledge which reſult-

(b) Strabo, lib. 17. attributes the invention of aſtronomy and geometry to the Egyptians.

ed

ed from them. Memphis, however mutilated by a barbarian, preſerved ſo many remains of her magnificence, as to be ſtill the firſt city in the world. For upwards of two hundred years, ſhe laboured to ſhake off the odious Perſian yoke. Alexander, to whom ſhe ſurrendered, amply avenged the outrages ſhe had ſuſtained. This conqueror, abandoning himſelf to a guilty delirium, renewed, within the walls of Perſepolis *(i)*, the horrors Cambyſes had committed at Thebes and at Memphis. Is there no retributive juſtice for empires, as well as for individuals? Charmed with the beauty of this country, whoſe antiquities he viſited ſeveral ages before the Chriſtian æra, he there founded a town bearing his name. It was embelliſhed by the Ptolemies, his ſucceſſors. In the decoration of their buildings they endeavoured to unite with the majeſty of the Egyptian, the elegance of the Grecian architecture. The Pharos appeared, and merited the admiration of the univerſe. Alexan-

(i) Quintus Curtius.

dria was another Rome. The arts and ſciences, under the ſovereign's eye, ſpread their reputation far and near. Commerce attracted thither wealth and abundance from all parts. Memphis was every day depopulated; her inhabitants paſſed to the new capital *(k)*. Under Auguſtus it was ſtill a great city, populous, and full of ſtrangers, but it then held only the rank of the ſecond city of Egypt. Six hundred years after, it became the firſt conqueſt of the Arabs, who beſieged its walls. The ſiege was long and bloody; but it was carried at length by ſtorm, and deſtroyed, as Abulfeda informs us. I ſhall give the paſſage of that learned hiſtorian; it confirms the poſition of Memphis, given by Pliny, and deſtroys the error of ſeveral authors *(l)*, who pretend, that the governors for the emperors of Conſtantinople reſided at Old Cairo, when Amrou made the conqueſt of Egypt. I think I have already demonſtrated in my eighth letter, that that town

(k) Strabo, lib. 17.

(l) Maillet, *deſcription de l'Egypte.* Father Sicard, *lettres edifiantes.*

did

did not then exiſt; and what follows will furniſh a freſh proof of it.

(m) " *Menf*, (that is to ſay, Memphis) is " the ancient Maſr *(n)* of Egypt. It " is ſituated on the weſtern bank of " the Nile. Amrou, ſon of *El Aas*, " having taken it by ſtorm, raſed it " to the ground, and went to build the " town of Foſtat by order of Omar, ſon of

(m) " Menf hié Maſr elcadimé oua hié an garbi el Nil. Oua lemma fatahha Omar ebn el Aas kharabha oua bena el Foſtat men elbar elakhar el charqui be amr Omar ebn el khattab. Oua be menf atar cadimo azimé madſalo men elſakhour oua el menhouté el maſoura. Oua alaiha dehan akhdar, our khairo baki ila zamanna, hadé lam ietkhaïer men el chams oua khairha ala toul hadé eldemmé. Oua menf men maſr ala marhelé caribé."

Abulfeda, Deſcription of Egypt.

(n) I have already ſaid, in the letter on Old Cairo, that the Arabs have always given the name of *Maſr* to the capital of Egypt. Memphis bore that title until it was ruined by Amrou. It was then tranſferred to *Foſtat*, which preſerved it until it was ſet on fire by Schaouar, to hinder it from falling into the hands of the French. From that time Grand Cairo has received the name of *Maſr*, and Foſtat that of *Maſr el atik*, the ancient *Maſr*, or capital.

" Kettab, on the oppoſite ſide. At Menf
" are remarkable ruins, the remains of its
" ancient ſplendor, and which are ſuffered
" to fall into decay; one there ſees ſtones,
" the ſculpture and painting of which ex-
" cite admiration; the ſun and the injuries
" of time not hitherto having been able
" to efface the colours. *Menf* is diſtant a
" ſhort day's journey from Grand Cairo."

Theſe particulars agree both with the deſcription of Pliny, and with what ſtill remains in our days. The village of *Menf*, ſad remains of an immenſe city, is ſix leagues from Grand Cairo, on the weſtern bank of the Nile. This is preciſely the poſition of the learned naturaliſt, for they reckon four leagues from Grand Cairo to the pyramids, and two from theſe monuments to the village of Menf. The ruins around it confirm the account of Abulſeda. *(o)* Even the lakes, ſpoken of

(o) Theſe lakes, which all antiquity repreſents as near to Memphis, are a demonſtrative proof that it was ſituated at the village of *Menf*, and not at Giſa; for there is not the ſmalleſt appearance of a lake for three leagues around that little town.

by

by Herodotus and Strabo, have not entirely diſappeared. One of them is near Saccara, with a wood of Acacia, ſituated to the weſtward of Menf; the other is preciſely north of it. In the time of the inundation, it reaches as far as the raiſed cauſeway in the marſhes which ſeparate the great pyramids from the Nile. This was thrown up *(p)* to facilitate the carriage of the marble, which formed the paſſages, and covering of theſe buildings; and the dyke ſtill ſubſiſts, with bridges in it, to leave a free paſſage for the waters. One goes along it, in going to ſee the pyramids, in a boat during the inundation.

Theſe, Sir, are the lakes which the inhabitants of Memphis were obliged to croſs, in order to convey their dead into the plains, where they had eſtabliſhed their mauſolea. As temples were built there *(q)*, in which expiatory ſacrifices were offered

(p) Herodotus, Euterpe.

(q) Each large pyramid had its temple, and prieſts, whoſe duty it was to ſlay expiatory victims, and to pray for the dead.

up

up for the dead; as theſe places of ſilence were an inviolable aſylum, and the ſacrilegious wretch would have paid the forfeit of his life, who dared to profane them, and trouble their profound peace, all the Egyptians were deſirous of making it their place of ſepulture. Each family dug for itſelf a ſtill habitation out of the rock covered with ſand, where father and ſon were depoſited one after the other with a religious piety. They never imagined that the enlightened people of Europe would one day come and tear them from their tombs, and that their bodies, ſo carefully buried and preſerved, would become the object of an infamous traffic. *(r)* The Greeks, who had aſſiſted at the judgments which the Egyptians alone, of all the people of the earth, pronounced againſt the memory of the dead, and who ſaw the places where they were carried in a boat, paying a ſmall tribute, invented from thence the fable of Charon and of hell. The beauty of the plains beyond

(r) Orpheus was initiated in the myſteries of Oſiris. *Diodorus Siculus*, p. 37.

that

that vaſt ſolitude of ſand, the canals which water them, and which preſerve there an ever-verdant foliage, furniſhed them with the idea of Styx, of Lethe, and of the Elyſian fields. Their brilliant and fertile imagination has embelliſhed theſe places with all the treaſures of poetry. This fable gained credit amongſt the people, and became an article of Pagan faith.

Such, Sir, are the reflexions which have occurred to me from an attentive peruſal of the ancients, and the ſight of the environs of the pyramids. May they prove worthy of your attention, and poſſeſs in your eyes the merit of truth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

Journey from Boulac to Damietta. Deſcription of the great branch of the Nile which ſtretches thither; the canals which go off from it; the towns and villages ſituated on their banks, and the ancient monuments which remain. A particular account of the fair of Tanta; the manners of the inhabitants in this part of Egypt; the woods in the neighbourhood of Samenout; the chicken-ovens of Manſoure, where the French army was defeated; and the navigation of the river.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo, 1779.

YOU reckon, Sir, an interval of ſixteen months ſince my laſt letter, and during this long ſpace of time your friendly apprehenſions have often painted to you the dangers to which one is expoſed in a barbarous country. They have more than

once

once made you tremble for my life. Honoured be thoſe ſentiments ſo dear to me, and which my heart returns you! But calm your uneaſineſs. There is a tutelar deity for travellers, who exacts no other homage than prudence and perſeverance. Paying him religiouſly that tribute, you are out of reach of danger. Ceaſe therefore to be alarmed, and attribute my ſilence to my continual labours and expeditions. As for you, Sir, continue to write to me. It is here one knows the value of a letter. With what tranſport one opens it! With what avidity one reads it! The day of receiving it is a day of feſtival. It is under a burning ſky, in the midſt of deſarts, that one feels cruelly the want of a friend. Every thing is precious which can recall his memory. Amongſt the Turks and Arabs, a Frenchman rarely finds a heart into which he can pour out his own. A crowd of ſentiments grow up and die in it, without being participated. Take pity on me then, and procure me frequently the only conſolation of the abſent. When I read the characters traced out by your hand, I ſeem to ſee, and hear you. The imagi-

nation,

nation, that happy enchantreſs, affords me an agreeable illuſion; theſe are at leaſt ſome happy moments; theſe are ſome flowers ſtrewed over the thorny road of life. Let us return to our correſpondence.

Two journeys into lower Egypt, viſiting the towns and canals of the eaſtern branch of the Nile, a reſidence of a year at Damietta, dedicated to perfecting myſelf in the Arabic dialect, ſpoken in Syria, this, Sir, has been my employment during the long ſilence you complain of. A thouſand times have I run over the delicious environs of this city. One is never ſatiated with contemplating the beauties of nature, and with viewing the happy image of abundance. I have followed the traces of the army of Saint Lewis, from his diſembarkation to Manſoura. The frank, ingenuous Joinville has written an account of this expedition, the commencement of which was ſo brilliant, and the concluſion ſo unfortunate. His narrative is obſcure, and leaves a great deal to be ſaid. The curious details preſerved by the Arabian authors, and the inſpection of the ſcene of action

action will furniſh me the means of explaining him, and of ſupplying that information he was in want of. As ſoon as I have finiſhed the account of my journey, I will endeavour to trace out to you this intereſting paſſage of our hiſtory.

The 15th of February I hired a *Canje* to carry me to Damietta. It is a boat ſmaller than a *Mach*, and deſigned for voyages of pleaſure. It contained a cabinet, and a handſome chamber, where we ſpread a carpet. A mat was raiſed forward in the form of a canopy, from whence one might ſee the country without being incommoded by the ſun. A tried janiſſary, who had ſerved in the campaigns of the famous *Ali Bey*, and an Arab ſervant, accompanied me. We were well armed, a neceſſary precaution on the canal of Damietta, where one is almoſt always attacked. The *Fellah (r)* who live upon its banks, attack the boats under cover of night, and if they meet with no reſiſtance, murder the paſſengers, and take poſſeſſion of their riches. A ſtranger ought

(r) The name of the Egyptian labourers.

to

to be very ſure both of the domeſtics, he takes with him, and of the fidelity of the maſter of the boat, who have frequently an underſtanding with the robbers, and ſhare with them. Inſtructed by experience, I give this advice to travellers who may come after me. I had very nearly loſt my life by not having followed it myſelf.

We had taken care to provide our bark with rice and coffee; theſe are the moſt eſſential proviſions. One finds eggs, milk, and poultry in all the villages. We had laid in a few magnumbonums of old Cyprus wine *(s)*. *Mahamet Aſſalamé*, though a good muſulman, was very glad to empty a few glaſſes of it from time to time; but he did it underhand, and avoided being ſeen even by the boatmen.

We left the port of Boulak about one o'clock in the afternoon. The ſky was ſerene, the heat as temperate as in our

(s) Mahamet Aſſalamé is the name of the Janiſſary who accompanied me. He is an upright, brave, and faithful fellow, to whom I have been under great obligations during my travels. At my departure he entered into the ſervice of the Conſul of France at Alexandria.

fineſt

fineſt days of ſpring. The Nile, returned into its bed ſix weeks before, was gradually falling. The current, which was not rapid, and the north wind, obliged us to have recourſe to oars. The barley and the corn began to ripen. The *chartame*, and the dorra, or India millet, was a foot above the ground. The lucern was ſpringing for the third time. The cucumbers and water-melons were extending their flexible branches on the banks of the river. The flax and beans were approaching to maturity. The foliage of the trees offered different tints of verdure. The orange and lemon-trees were decked with flowers. Such was the appearance of Egypt the 15th of February.

We were rowed along, and in an hour we paſſed the mouth of the canal of Adrian Cæſar, which went into that of the Red Sea. It croſſes the little town of *Kelioub*, and paſſes to the north of Heliopolis. Two leagues lower is the village of *Charakbanié*, below which the Nile ſeparates itſelf to form the Delta.

This is the ſpot (t) where Herodotus and Pomponius Mela place the ancient town of *Cercaſorum*. Mr. Danville, following the opinion of Strabo, places it on the weſtern bank of the Nile at the village of *El-Arkſas*.

We advanced ſlowly, but the conſtant ſpectacle of a great number of boats going up and coming down the river, the ſight of a country enriched with varied productions, and covered with flocks, amuſed our eyes, and compenſated for the obſtacles we met with. Arrived at *Batn el bakara*, the place of the diviſion of the Nile, we left the branch of Roſetta to the left, and entered that of Damietta. The firſt makes an elbow to the eaſtward; the ſecond going towards the north, and continuing in the direction of the former bed, receives a greater quantity of water. It is from hence accordingly that the moſt conſiderable ca-

(t) Herodotus, lib. 2. and Pomponius Mela, ſay that the town of *Cercaſorum* was ſituated near the ſeparation of the Nile on the eaſtern bank. Its ancient ſite is occupied in our time by the village of *Charakhania*.

nals

nals branch out. I ſhall point them out as we go on.

The ſun was on the decline. Our mariners were afraid to paſs the night before the little town of *Dagoué*, an old haunt for robbers. In the time of Father Sicard, a man of the name of *Habib* had eſtabliſhed himſelf a petty tyrant there, and by the aid of well-timed preſents to the powers of Cairo, he laid all the navigators under contribution. This place is ſtill infeſted with pirates. A large boat I was in laſt year, with upwards of thirty Turks, was attacked there. Our arms, and the good countenance we ſhewed, drove off the enemy, whoſe intention was to plunder, not to fight. Theſe conſiderations determined us to ſtop before the little hamlet of *Zouſeti*, where we caſt anchor; and whilſt the ſervant was preparing ſupper, I took a walk with the janiſſary in an adjacent wood. We carried each of us a pair of piſtols at his belt, a large couteau de chaſſe at his ſide, and a double barrelled gun on his ſhoulder.

Several rows of trees planted round a vaſt field formed a ſemicircular encloſure, whoſe

ſides extended to the river. Towards the middle, a few round earthen huts roſe up under the ſhade of the ſycamore. To the right and left, pomegranate, palm, tamarind, and orange-trees, irregularly diſperſed, formed ſeveral ſmall groves. They were interſperſed with tufts of *henné*, a beautiful ſhrub, whoſe flower ſerves to dye yellow. The freſhneſs of the graſs, the variety of the trees, the ſcattered thickets, the flowers of lemon and orange-trees, a multitude of turtle-doves, ſeeking an aſylum under their thick foliage, the numerous herds they were driving back from paſture, formed altogether a pleaſant and animated ſcene, which produced a tranquil joy, a ſentiment of happineſs in the mind, always reſulting from the ſight of the beauties of nature.

We advanced to the labourers cabins. The women who were round them went in at our approach. The men alone remained, and taking us from our dreſs for the officers of ſome Bey, coming to exact a contribution from them, they ſeemed alarmed. We removed their fears, by telling them that we only demanded a few freſh

freſh eggs, and ſome milk. Theſe words having diſſipated their apprehenſions, they were eager to ſatisfy us, and conduct us back to our boat. Notwithſtanding theſe friendly tokens, we kept watch all night. Each of us mounted guard in his turn; but no accident happened to diſturb our tranquillity.

16th of February.

I had ſlept ſome hours wrapped up in my cloak, in the Arabian faſhion, when the cries of the mariners preparing to depart awakened me. The ſun was riſing, and the dew having fallen plentifully, the ſky was pure, and without clouds. Caſting my eyes towards the wood we had been walking in, in the evening, I ſaw flocks of birds as white as ſnow, hovering over the tops of the trees. The Arabs call them *Garde Boeuf*, or *Watch Oxen*, from their always accompanying theſe animals. They are of the ſize of a pheaſant, with red feet, and a black bill. Their ſilver plumage formed an agreeable contraſt with the deep green of the date-trees. Thou-

ſands of turtle-doves were flying from one orange-tree to another, and celebrating by their accents the riſing day. Flights of pigeons were deſcending from the dove-cotes to the banks of the river. All theſe birds ſeemed as if they were tame. As they are not purſued, and ſeldom or never hear the frightful ſound of gunpowder, they appear with confidence, and do not fly the approach of man.

We weighed anchor, and coaſted along the left bank of the river, by the aid of oars and the current, for the wind was ſtill contrary. We paſſed near *Caſr (u) Faraoumié*, ſituated at the head of a large canal, which obliquely croſſing the Delta, diſcharges itſelf into the branch of Roſetta. We perceived on the right bank of the Nile ſeveral diſtant hamlets. We often paſſed between numerous iſles with which its bed is ſtrewed, and preſently ſaw the little fort of *Tant*, ſurrounded by a ſmall canal.

An hour after leaving it, we arrived before the ſmall town of *Dagoué*. The Nile

(u) *Caſr* ſignifies village.

here

here makes a great bend, as if purpoſely to detain travellers the longer before this haunt of robbers. From this elbow a river ſtrikes off, formed by the hand of man, and as large as the Saone. It joins the canal of *Faraounié*, before it reaches *Menouf*, the capital of the firſt province of the Delta. It is navigable from the month of Auguſt to December, for the largeſt boats. I have gone up the whole length of it from *Nadir* on the branch of Roſetta, unto that of Damietta. Its direction is from north-eaſt to ſouth-weſt. Nothing can be freſher, richer, or gayer than its banks. It ſeems to paſs through the terreſtrial paradiſe. This beautiful river furniſhes other canals with water, which I ſhall point out in the map. One of them in its courſe to lake *Bourlos*, paſſes by the large burgh of Tanta, where a conſiderable fair is annually held. The inhabitants of Upper and Lower Egypt collect there in great numbers. It continues eight days, and the productions of the country are exchanged for India ſtuffs, Moka coffee, and French cloths. The thirſt of gain

draws a part of the Egyptians there. Others are attracted by pleaſure. Ten thouſand boats cover the canal at this period. All of them are well provided with proviſions. They make good cheer, have muſic, and give themſelves up to joy. Almoſt as many tents are pitched upon the bank. The moſt celebrated courtezans of Egypt are ſure to have their pavillions there. They are introduced into the boats, where they diſplay their talents for dancing, ſinging, and gallantry. Several glaſs lamps are lighted every night on each maſt, whoſe light infinitely reflected, forms in the water innumerable ſtars. The tents are alſo lighted *(x)*. This wonderful illumination, a league in length, produces on the verdure, and in the cryſtal of the water, the moſt admirable effects. Theſe fairs, the remains of the ancient pilgrimages to Canopus, to Sais, and Bubaſtis, are not uncommon in Egypt, and are always greatly frequented.

(x) Herodotus informs us that ſimilar illuminations were made at the feaſts of Iſis, in the city of Buſiris, at Bubaſtis, during the feſtivals of Diana, and in other towns in Egypt. *Euterpe, lib.* 2.

We

We got away from *Dagoué* with pleaſure; and after paſſing ſeveral hamlets, diſcovered the village of *Atrib(y)*, on the right banks. It has nothing remarkable but its name. The cottages it is compoſed of, cover the ruins of the ancient *Atribis*. Ammianus Marcellinus aſſerts that this town was one of the moſt conſiderable in Egypt. If this opinion be not exaggerated, it is rather aſtoniſhing that it has not preſerved one ſingle remarkable monument. A little below *Atrib* runs a large canal which empties itſelf into Lake *Menzale* towards the eaſtern part of it. Another ſprout from the Nile, which began towards the point of the Delta *(z)*, joined it here, and they formed together the Peluſiac branch. Following its courſe, one fell in with *Phacuſa*, where the canal which communicated with the Red Sea began, and the

(y) The learned Danville places both this town and canal too low in his map of Egypt.

(z) Herodotus and Pomponius Mela ſay poſitively that below *Cercaſorum*, whoſe ſituation I have pointed out, the Nile was *triple*, from dividing itſelf into three branches. The eaſternmoſt, which was that of Bubaſtis or Peluſium, is not navigable; the other two ſtill are.

great

great city of Bubaſtis, where Diana was adored. She there had a magnificent temple. Herodotus has given us a pictureſque deſcription of the worſhip of that goddeſs. I ſhall give the paſſage, becauſe it ſerves to prove how little the Egyptian manners have changed ſince the time of that excellent hiſtorian.

" The people repair in crowds from all " parts of Egypt to the feaſt of Diana, at " Bubaſtis. A multitude of boats ſail to- " wards that city. In every boat female " muſicians accompany their ſongs with " cymbals, and tambours de baſque; men " play on the flute, others ſing and beat " time with their hands. They ſtop be- " fore all the towns in their paſſage, and the " muſic ſtrikes up *(a)*. The women, aban- " doning themſelves to the intoxication of " joy, incite thoſe they meet by the moſt " licentious invitations; they ſing lewd " ſongs, and perform laſcivious dances. On " their arrival at *Bubaſtis*, innumerable

(a) Theſe women are doubtleſs the dancing and ſinging Egyptian girls of Herodotus, who were not more decent then, than they are in our days.

" victims

"victims are ſacrificed during the ſolem-
"nity, and more wine is drank in one
"day, than in the reſt of the whole year.
"More than ſeven hundred thouſand per-
"ſons are aſſembled."

Since the days of Herodotus, the Egyptians have paſſed under different governments, and are at length plunged into the depth of ignorance and ſlavery; but their character is not eſſentially changed. All the mad ceremonies, ſanctified by the heathen religion, are renewed at this day around the tombs of the ſantons *(b)*, before the churches of the Copti *(c)*, and at the fairs I have ſpoken of. The taſte for pilgrimages ſtill ſubſiſts amongſt them. Their dances, their muſic are the ſame. In ſpite of the ſhackles with which the Mahometan religion has enchained them, their natural character breaks forth, and the inclinations

(b) The Mahometans repair on certain days of the year to the tombs of ſome perſons they regard as ſaints, and celebrate their feſtival by giving themſelves up to joy, good cheer, and licentiouſneſs.

(c) The Copti celebrate pretty nearly in the ſame manner the feaſt of St. Gemiane in Lower Egypt.

of

of their forefathers prevail; ſo true it is, that old habits, ariſing from climate, triumph at length over every law. It is a torrent which continually follows an irreſiſtible declivity. The art of the legiſlator conſiſts not in oppoſing a dyke to its courſe, but in artfully diverting it, ſo as to prevent its ravages, and render it uſeful. Let us reſume our voyage.

Below *Atrib* the villages are ſo near each other, that the banks of the Nile have the appearance of a long town, interrupted only by gardens, and ſweet ſcented groves. In contemplating the beauty of the heavens, the variety of the trees, its numerous herds, the perpetually renewing riches of an inexhauſtible ſoil, one cannot help ſaying to one's ſelf; Let us not be ſurpriſed that the Egyptians erected the greateſt monuments in the univerſe; they were enlightened, they inhabited the moſt beautiful climate in the world, and an earth which only demanded of man to depoſit ſeeds within its boſom. Deſpotiſm and barbariſm have marked everywhere the traces of deſolation, but what *might* not a people, friends to the arts

arts and ſciences undertake in that country? What treaſures might they not draw from agriculture and commerce? What knowledge, buried under the veil of hieroglyphics, might they not reſtore to ſciences and to hiſtory? Pardon a traveller theſe reflexions, and theſe wiſhes, who has before his eyes the misfortune and the riches of ſo fine a country.

After ſailing ſeveral hours amongſt iſles and hamlets, we caſt anchor at *Mit rhamr*. I landed there, and ran through that ſmall but very populous and commercial town. It contains nothing remarkable, nothing that bears the appearance of antiquity. The market-places are narrow and ill-lighted, the ſtreets crooked and dirty. One ſees a moſque here with a ſquare tower, which appears to me to have ſerved as a church for the Chriſtians, before the Arabian conqueſt. Through all Egypt, in fact, there is not a ſimilar minaret; they are all round, narrow, and lofty.

After viſiting *Mit rhamr*, we croſſed the river, and deſcended to *Zephté*, ſituated oppoſite. This little town, as well as the

the former, does not merit the pains we took to ſurvey it. Part of the houſes are built of earth, the reſt of brick. Several of them fall into ruins, and nobody repairs them. The people appear miſerable there, and it appears very evident, that it is not for them that the luxuriant fields of the neighbourhood are cultivated.

The ſun being ſtill above the horizon, we continued our journey. The villages ſucceeded each other always at the ſame diſtance. They are much more frequent on this branch, than on that of Roſetta. This muſt be aſcribed to the deſtruction of ſeveral large towns, which were in the eaſtern part of the Delta. In proportion as they were laid waſte, the ſupport of the canals which conveyed thither the waters of the Nile, has been neglected, the lands have remained uncultivated, the people have got nearer the river, and have fixed their habitations on its banks. What a quantity of barren country would an enlightened government reſtore to agriculture? The wind continuing contrary, the rowers being fatigued, and night approaching,

proaching, we caſt anchor between an iſland and *Mit Demſis*. This was by no means a ſafe place, but we determined to keep a good look out.

17th.

We were ſleeping quietly, when towards midnight, two men ſwimming, approached the boat under cover of the darkneſs. The janiſſary who had the watch, perceiving them by the light of the ſtars, cried out, and diſcharged his fuſil, and they diſappeared. The noiſe having awakened us, we took to our arms, but he calmed our uneaſineſs, by telling us the occaſion of it. Theſe robbers are ſo adroit, that when they find the paſſengers aſleep, they carry off part of their effects, and even large bales, which they ſwim off with. On being ſurprized, they plunge into the river, and eſcape from all purſuit. This *alert* kept us awake the reſt of the night; and to paſs the time, Mahomet Aſſalamé recounted to us all the battles of *Ali Bey*. Theſe tales were ſeaſoned with large cups of moka, which we emptied

emptied from time to time. They take it at all hours. The Turks eſteem it an excellent fortifier, and neceſſary in a country where the ſtomach, relaxed by heat, with difficulty performs its functions. From this opinion they call it *Caboué (d)*, which ſignifies *force*. However this may be, it is at leaſt certain that the Egyptians commonly take two cups of it a day, and frequently much more, without experiencing any of thoſe miſchievous effects aſcribed to it by the European phyſicians.

The day, too tardy in appearing for our impatience, came at length, and the ſun at his riſing ſhewed himſelf paler than uſual, a ſign of a ſoutherly wind. Accordingly it ſoon began to blow. We ſet ſail; and perceived, in paſſing, a canal, which taking its riſe below *Mit demſis*, empties its waters into Lake Menzalé. The wind freſhened, and our veſſel cut the waves with rapidity.

(d) The Arabs call the coffee in grain *Boun*, and what they drink, *Caboué*, from whence the Europeans have derived the word *Coffee*.

We

We ſoon reached the village of *Bouſir (e)*, ſituated on the weſtern bank of the Nile, two leagues from *Semennoud*. This ſituation agrees perfectly with that of the ancient city of *Buſiris*, capital of a diſtrict, as laid down by Herodotus and Strabo. A ſuperb temple, dedicated to the goddeſs *Iſis*, the ſame with Ceres, attracted there a prodigious concourſe of people. It was one of the moſt frequented pilgrimages of Egypt. *Bouſir* preſerves no veſtiges of its ancient ſplendor. The precious marbles, with which the temple was built, have been carried off from it, no doubt from its ſitu-

(*e*) Abulfeda reckons four cities of this name in Upper, and one in Lower Egypt, which is that I ſpeak of, and is called *Bouſir bqna*, to diſtinguiſh it from the others.

Herodotus, lib. 2, and Strabo, lib. 17, place *Buſiris* above *Sebennytus*, the modern *Semennoud*, in going up towards the point of the Delta. This is exactly the poſition of the village of *Bouſir*.

Strabo, in ſpeaking of this town, aſſerts, that the fables told of the cruelties of Buſiris, are totally without foundation, that there never was a king of that name in Egypt, and that they were invented by malignity, by way of revenge for the inhoſpitality of the Egyptians, who did not like ſtrangers.

ation on the banks of the river. Perhaps, too, ſome remains of it might be diſcovered under the wretched dwellings built on the ſame ſpot.

A league below *Bouſir*, is the entrance of a canal, which, joining one of the branches of that of Menouf, paſſes near *Meballé*, and empties itſelf into lake *Bourlos (f)*. A little farther, I diſcovered a ſmall wood where I had landed in a former voyage: as its ſituation is charming, I reſolved to dine there. The ſail was lowered, and we went on ſhore. A long alley of thick and lofty willows of Babylon, extend along the bank of the river. Their bending branches bathe themſelves in the water; behind this alley, pomegranate trees, planted in quincunxes, formed a pleaſant grove, ſurrounded by a canal of the Nile. At the extremity, is a field enriched with variegated harveſts, and terminated by cottages, ſituated amidſt orange-trees in flower. Seated under the willows,

(f) This lake is known amongſt ſailors by the name of *Brulos*, as well as the cape that forms the moſt advanced point of it.

the

the feet hanging over the river, you have before you an iſland, which ſeparates its bed in two. The thick graſs with which it is covered, is ſo freſh as to invite the eye to dwell upon it. On the oppoſite bank, one ſees the villages of *Salanié*, of *Mit Abulhari*, and of *Gerah*. They are only ſeparated by tufts of date and orange-trees, and ſome fields planted with vegetables and different crops; on the right is *Bouſir*, which is loſt in the horizon; on the left the town of *Semennoud*, crowned with lofty minarets. I never ſaw a more agreeable ſituation than this. The heavens, the earth, the waters, the ſhades, the verdure, the flowers, the ſight of hamlets and of towns, every thing combines to give pleaſure to the eye. We dined in this delicious ſpot. Twice I halted there, and twice have I experienced the involuntary charm which all beautiful objects produce in the mind, that pure contentment and tranquillity, with which they penetrate the ſoul, and which force it to diffuſe on the ſurrounding objects that profuſion of delight, which overwhelms it. Happy they, who at that

moment find a heart wherein they can pour the delicious ſentiments they feel, and tranſport it by the communication!

A league and a half to the weſtward of this wood is *Meballé el Kebiré*, capital of *Garbia*, the ſecond province of the Delta, and the reſidence of a Bey. As there is no town more conſiderable in the Delta, it is called *Kebira* the Great. It has manufactories of linen, and ſome ſal ammoniac works. A great deal of buſineſs is done there. The rivers which ſurround it ſerve for the conveyance of its merchandize throughout Egypt. Its environs are covered with villages, flocks, and the various productions of an ever fertile ſoil. *Meballé* has replaced the cities of *Sebennytus* and *Buſiris*, but has retained nothing of their magnificence. There is no remarkable building to be ſeen there.

Whilſt we were quietly repoſing on the bank of the river, the wind ſhifted to the ſouth-eaſt, and blew with violence. Becoming ſoon a furious hurricane, it raiſed vaſt clouds of hot duſt, which darkened the heavens, and diffuſed a gloomy paleneſs

neſs over all nature. This dark veil, through which the ſun's diſk appeared like blood, laſted two hours, and ſubſided. When ſuch whirlwinds ſurpriſe the traveller in the midſt of the deſart, he is buried under them, unleſs he has time to ſhelter himſelf in a tent; but if the ſtorm laſts long, even that aſylum becomes his tomb; a hillock of ſand riſes round him, and he is ſmothered. The wind falling, the ſky reſumed its ſerenity; we went on board our bark, and fell down to *Semennoud*.

This is the ancient *Sebennytus*, capital of a diſtrict. It is of a moderate ſize, populous and commercial. The market-places, occupied by ſhopkeepers, afford various articles in great plenty, and very cheap. Excepting the moſques, all the buildings are of brick. I could diſcover in it no remains of antiquity.

Half a league to the northward of *Semennoud*, is the canal of *Thebania*, which falls into Lake Bourlos, near the ruins of the great *Butis (g)*. This city was

(g) Herodotus, lib. 2. Euterpe.

decorated with two temples built in honour of Apollo and Diana. It was rendered famous from the oracle of *Latona*, which was conſulted from all parts of Egypt. The temple of that divinity was vaſt and magnificent. It was ſurrounded by a portico fifty feet high, ſupported by marble columns *(b)*. A maſs of granite, hollowed out by the hammer, and whoſe external ſurfaces were ſixty feet ſquare, formed the ſanctuary. It was completely ſhut by a ſtone of equal ſize, and ſix feet thick. No modern traveller has viſited *Butis*; the journey would be attended with great danger; ſo that it is impoſſible to know whether the deſcription of Herodotus be accurate. After ſeeing the pillar of Alexandria, however, and other monuments not leſs aſtoniſhing, one

(b) This enormous maſs of granite, which was 240 feet in circumference, was hewn in a quarry which is ſtill to be ſeen in the Iſle of *Philé*, near the cataracts. It was brought on rafts the diſtance of 200 leagues to the place where it was depoſited. It is without doubt the heavieſt load ever moved by human power.

is induced to believe that this hiſtorian, who had been on the ſpot, has not impoſed upon poſterity.

A league and a half from *Semennoud*, near the canal of *Thebania*, is a large mound of earth, covered with ruins. Pocock and Father Sicard call this place *Bba beit*, Houſe of beauty; the Turks, with whom I have been, call it *Hajar beit*, Houſe of ſtone. However that may be, theſe are the ruins of a large temple, built entirely of marble. The walls were ten feet thick towards the foundation, and were compoſed of beautiful granite, ſpotted with red, which is found in the quarries of Sienna, and which receives a perfect poliſh. The pillars were four feet diameter. The head of Iſis ſerved by way of capital. One meets with pieces of precious marble amongſt the ruins, the remains of ſtatues which decorated this ſuperb edifice. The greateſt part of the ſtones are covered with hieroglyphics, amongſt which one diſtinguiſhes ſome men with painted bonnets, ſome young girls, birds, and different animals. All theſe figures

are of moſt delightful ſculpture. The attitudes are excellent, nor is the Egyptian taſte any where ſo pure, nor the ſculpture ſo well executed. Theſe beautiful ruins are abandoned to the barbariſm of the Turks, who daily carry off blocks of marble, or ſaw the pillars to make millſtones of them.

Mr. Pocock and Father Sicard agree in ſaying, that this temple is that built by Buſiris, in honour of the goddeſs Iſis; but its ſituation does not agree with what is mentioned of that town by Herodotus and Strabo, according to whom, as I have ſaid, it was two leagues above *Semennoud*, where the village of *Bouſir* now ſtands. I am rather inclined to think with Danville, that the edifice in queſtion was in the city of Iſis itſelf, which Pliny and Stephen of Byzantium place towards the bottom of the Delta. This appears to me the moſt probable opinion. If Egypt was not in the hands of barbarians, if one was allowed to ſearch there, a great many doubts would be cleared up, which at preſent obſcure the ancient hiſtory of this country. In ſpite of every poſſible

poſſible information, there are ſome points in which we only can approach the truth, without preſuming to flatter ourſelves we have attained it.

We returned from our expedition in the evening. *Mahamet Aſſalamé*, for whom, to remain ſeated with his pipe, was a pleaſure a thouſand times greater than the moſt wonderful ruins in the univerſe, invited me to go to a coffee-houſe where he heard muſic. I accepted his offer the more readily, as from my ſpeaking Arabic, I could paſs for a Turk. We accordingly went. Our arms, our military dreſs, which were very neat, made them take us for Janiſſary officers. The townſmen of *Semennoud* roſe up and gave us the place of honour. They were ſitting ſquat on eſtrades covered with mats. We ſat down on a raiſed ſopha. The maſter of the coffee-houſe himſelf preſented us with moka, and lighted our pipes. Preſently a dancing girl, who was amuſing the aſſembly, began to leap about before us. She threw herſelf, according to the cuſtom of the country, into the

moſt

moſt laſcivious attitudes. The tambour de baſque, and cymbals regulated her ſteps. The more indecent her geſtures were, and the more ſignificant her movements, the more did they laviſh their applauſes on her, conſequently ſhe was not ſparing of them. After the dance was finiſhed, ſhe came and ſat down by us, and chaunted *moals*, in praiſe of ſome Muſulmen, then ſang ſome very lively airs. This courtezan was called *Bedaoui*. She was fourteen years old, and a perfect beauty. Her ſilken garments, which were extremely light, and ſlightly faſtened by a long ſaſh, let us loſe no part of the beautiful contours of her body: her ebon locks, perfumed with eſſences, fell in ſeveral treſſes, to her very heels. A veil, gracefully lifted up, covered her ſhoulders. She had large black eyes, a complexion leſs brown than the women of the lower claſs, a delicate mouth, and an agreeable ſmile; but two blue ſpots made on her cheeks with gunpowder, and a ring at one of her noſtrils, diſfigured her in my eyes. Such was the young *Bedaoui*. She had

come

come from Cairo, and was ſeeking her fortune. Finding that we had paid her generouſly for dancing and ſinging, ſhe offered to accompany us in our voyage. We thanked for her kind intention, and returned to paſs the reſt of the night in our boat.

18th.

We had taken care to renew our ſtock of proviſions at *Semennoud*, where one meets with excellent pigeons, good poultry and freſh butter of a moſt exquiſite flavour. We ſet out at ſunriſe. The wind being almoſt eaſterly, allowed us to carry ſail. After two hours navigation, we perceived the minarets of *Manſoura*, where we ſoon came to anchor. I landed, curious to examine this town, celebrated by the courage and the misfortunes of St. Louis. It is tolerably large, but without any fortification. The ſtreets are narrow, and the houſes built of brick, as in the reſt of the Delta. One quarter of it is almoſt in ruins. It was in the midſt of theſe ruins, doubtleſs,

doubtleſs, that the brave Joinville, who had penetrated thus far, defended himſelf a long time againſt the efforts of the Egyptians. He eſcaped from thence covered with wounds. Peter, Duke of Britany, loſt an eye there; but I reſerve theſe particulars for the piece of hiſtory which I have promiſed you.

Manſoura is a modern town, the origin of which is given us by Abulfeda in theſe words *(i)*; "King Camel *(k)*, ſon of "Eladel, laid the foundation of Manſoura, "at the place where the Nile ſeparates "into two branches, one of which flows "towards Damietta, the other towards

(i) "Oua el Manſoura benaha el melec el camel "ebn el adel, and maſterek el Nil ila doumiat, oua "*achmoun* benaha fi ouegg el adou lamma haſerou "doumiat."

This paſſage proves that the learned Pocock was deceived, in taking this city for that of *Tanis* or *Zoan* of the ſcriptures.

(k) This prince was the ſeventh king of the poſterity of the Aioubites. He died at Damaſcus, in the year 635 of the hegira.

"Achmoun.

"Achmoun *(l)*. He built it by way of "rampart againſt the enemy, whilſt they "were beſieging Damietta *(m)*."

The Chriſtians of Syria eſtabliſhed at Manſoura *(n)* carry on almoſt all the trade. The chief articles are the fine rice, which grows on the borders of the lake, and ſal ammoniac. One ſees vaſt ovens here for hatching eggs. As Egypt is the only country where the artificial incubation of eggs is practiſed, I will give you the deſcription of it.

Figure to yourſelf a building of two ſtories, the firſt of which is under ground, and the ſecond very little elevated. A narrow corridor, which divides each ſtory

(l) Achmoun is a town built by the Arabs, near lake Menzalé. They ſometimes call it Achmoun Tanis, from its ſtanding on the ſite of the ancient city of *Tanis*, whoſe ruins are to be ſeen in an iſle of the ſame lake. The foundation of this town was laid in the reign of Elmetouakkel. *Elmacin.*

(m) It was during the time that the Cruſaders laid ſiege to Damietta, one and thirty years before the expedition of St. Louis, that King Camel built Manſoura. *Macrizi.*

(n) Manſoura ſignifies in Arabic, *the Victorious.*

into

into two equal parts, runs the whole length of it. To the right and left are little cells, where the eggs are depoſited. The upper ſtory is vaulted with an ox-eye at the top. There is a ſimilar aperture in the floor by which the heat communicates below. Both have a ſmall window, which is carefully blocked up. The door of entrance is very low, and ſerves for a communication with the whole building. The eggs are firſt ranged in heaps in the lower ſtory. The fire is then lighted in the upper ſtory, for an hour in the morning, and an hour in the evening. Cows dung dried in the ſun ſerves for fuel. This operation laſts eight days. When the building has received the proper degree of heat, the fire is extinguiſhed, all the apertures are ſhut, and part of the eggs heaped up below, are carried into the upper ſtory. The man who looks after this operation, enters from time to time to examine if it be neceſſary to preſerve the ſame heat, or to diminiſh it. The nineteenth day of the incubation, the chickens begin to ſtir in their ſhell; the twentieth

tieth they make uſe of their beak, and try to get out of priſon. They all uſually hatch the one-and-twentieth day. Then it is that one ſees theſe heaps of eggs, hitherto immoveable, in agitation, and rolling on the floor, and that thouſands of little flutterers of various colours, are to be ſeen hopping about the apartment. This ſight is really amuſing. The next day they are carried about the town in baſkets, and cried in the ſtreets. Each family purchaſes their proviſion of them at a halfpenny a piece. Several authors have aſſerted that theſe chickens never become ſuch good poultry as thoſe hatched under the hen. This is a miſtake. A French cook I ſaw at Grand Cairo, bought them every year, and by feeding them well, made excellent pullets of them. It is ſaid here that the inhabitants of the village of *Bermé* alone, have the ſecret of this incubation. This is a fact however I have not aſcertained.

After ſurveying Manſoura, we went to ſee the canal which bounds it to the northward. It is wide and deep, and falls into

into lake Menzalé, below *Achmoun*. The paſſage of this river was fatal to the French army, and its waters were tinged with their blood, and filled with their dead bodies. Our curioſity being ſatisfied, we again ſet ſail in the evening. Near Manſoura the Nile changes its direction, and runs north-eaſt. The country on its banks, preſents every where the ſame abundance, but the villages are leſs frequent. We paſſed at duſk before *Diaſt*, a ſmall town a day's journey diſtant from St. Gemiane, where the Copti go in pilgrimage. At the time of that feſtival, the plain is covered with tents. The Chriſtians and Mahometans promiſcuouſly rejoice together for eight days. There are horſe-races, and they give themſelves up to wine and good cheer. The dancing girls come thither in great numbers, and Bacchus and Venus preſide at the entertainment.

Night had thrown his ſhade over the earth; but it is not here thick and impenetrable. It is a tranſparent veil which only half conceals the objects. One ſees through

through it the azure of a ſerene ſky, and an infinite number of ſtars which ſhine in the firmament. They have a more brilliant light, and appear larger than in temperate climates. The night in Egypt has a thouſand charms we rarely experience in Europe. Thick darkneſs never covers her brow. The blaſt of tempeſts never diſturbs its tranquillity. Deluges of rain do not render it the image of chaos. The wind falls uſually with the ſun. Nature remains in a perfect calm. It is then that the man who is fond of contemplation, reſigns himſelf without trouble to the ſtudy of his exiſtence. It is then that the aſtronomer who views the heavens, enjoying the ſight of a firmament without clouds, can follow the motion of the ſtars through the immenſity of ſpace.

Whilſt we were deſcending, and the ſtraggling lights apprized us of the approach of boats which were coming up the river, one of them in an eddy gave us a ſevere ſhock, and was very near ſending us to the bottom. We immediately gained

the ſhore, to examine if we made no water, and reſolved to paſs the night there. This accident happened to us near the little village of *Saoualim*. This place has twice been nearly fatal to me, as I am going to inform you, for the benefit of thoſe who may be led by curioſity into Egypt.

Laſt year I went down from Cairo with a French officer, who was going to embark at Damietta, to return to India by Baſſora. We had only one ſervant and three ſailors with us. The officer opened during the voyage a little box filled with ſequins, and counted them. This was enough to endanger our lives. I told him ſo, but he paid no attention to me. The ſailors, tempted by the ſight of the gold, formed the project of murdering us. The two firſt nights they had no opportunity of carrying it into execution, as we were upon our guard. The third, a contrary wind having forced us to lie-to, they faſtened the boat to the ſhore, and one of them went to form the plot at a neighbouring hamlet.

He

He returned an hour after, and lay down with the others. The fatigue of long watching, and the heat, made us fall aſleep. I had ſlept ſoundly for about an hour, when I ſuddenly found myſelf as if ſhaken by ſomething, and perfectly awakened, without being able to conceive the cauſe of it. It was clear moon-light, and I immediately perceived a man with one foot already in the boat, who held a naked, poniard. I fly to my two barrelled gun, and clapping it to his breaſt, I cry out to him in Arabic, that he is a dead man if he does not immediately make off. His two arms drop, and he remains motionleſs with ſurpriſe. At the ſame inſtant I perceive a few paces from him, three more robbers armed with ſabres and piſtols. I watched their motions, determined to fire at the firſt who ſhould aſſume a threatening attitude. I durſt not turn my head to alarm my companion, leſt they ſhould take that opportunity to fire at me. He, however, whom I preſented my piece at, getting off to a diſtance, I awakened the officer. He armed

ed himſelf, and whilſt the rogues were holding a council together, I looſed the boat, and we paſſed to the other ſide of the river. During this whole ſcene, the boatmen and the ſervant pretended to be in a profound ſleep. My cries did not awaken them, and we were obliged to have recourſe to blows to effect it. At Damietta, I diſcovered that theſe villains had ſtolen ſeveral things from me; but the fear of the baſtinado obliged them to reſtore them. I could not help returning thanks to providence for my eſcape from this danger, by awakening ſo opportunely. Two minutes later, and all was over.

19th.

The remembrance of what had happened to me at that time, made us keep watch the reſt of the night. This precaution was unneceſſary, Nobody diſturbed us. Our boat having only received a ſlight damage towards the extremity, we ſet ſail early in the morning. We paſſed before *Farcſcour*, which is not far from Damietta, and two hours

hours after we diſcovered that handſome town, which forms a vaſt creſcent on the eaſtern bank of the Nile. A multitude of boats and ſmall veſſels were at anchor there. We landed before the cuſtom-houſe.

LETTER XXIII.

Hiſtory of ancient and modern Damietta. Epoch of their foundation. A geographical account of the poſition of thoſe two cities. Refutation of travellers, who have univerſally confounded or miſplaced them in their charts and narratives. Deſcription of modern Damietta, its extent, commerce, baths, and inhabitants. Deſcription of the beautiful environs of this town, the woods, and groves of orange-trees; with an account of the lotus, denominated by Herodotus the lilly of the Nile; the papyrus, the exiſtence of which has been denied by ſeveral modern writers; the excellent rice cultivated by the people of Damietta, and which they export to Syria, the iſlands in the Archipelago, and the city of Marſeilles.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE hiſtory of Damietta, Sir, is very obſcure. Almoſt all the writers have confounded

confounded the ancient with the modern town. Their repeated erorrs have thrown obſcurity and uncertainty over this important point of Egyptian geography. To clear them up, it is neceſſary to follow the ſucceſſion of time, and to begin with that celebrated Damietta, ſo repeatedly attacked by the European princes. The knowledge of the ſeveral places, and epochas, will claſs the objects in your mind, and the facts repreſented as they ought to be, will furniſh you with clear and diſtinct ideas on the ſubject.

" Damietta, ſays Abulfeda, *(o)* was a " town ſurrounded by walls, and ſituated " at

(o) Oua doumiat canet mediné meſaoura ala el bahr and meſaab el Nil el charki. Deſcription of Egypt.

You ſee, Sir, that I am always obliged to expreſs the ſound of the Arabic words in French characters. I ſhould have preferred giving the paſſages as they are written in the original, but you know that in France we have profeſſors of Arabic, and no preſs for it. We are even the only learned people in Europe without that advantage. Nothing remains of thoſe fine characters caſt by order of Cardinal Richelieu, but the matrices. A foreign ſuperintendant would be ſufficient, with the aid of the learned, to teach the uſe of them; and

"at the mouth of the eaſtern branch of (p) "the Nile." Let us content ourſelves with this account of its ſituation, and trace out the origin of this town. Stephen of Byzantium informs us that it was called *Thamiatis* under the government of the Greeks of the lower empire, but that it was then very inconſiderable. It increaſed in importance every day, in proportion as Peluſium, which was frequently plundered, loſt its power. The total ruin of that ancient town occaſioned the commerce of the eaſtern parts of the Delta to be tranſferred to Damietta. It was, however, no longer a place of ſtrength, when, towards the year 238 of the Hegira, the emperors of Conſtantinople took poſſeſſion of it a ſecond time. The importance of a harbour ſo

we ſhould by degrees put ourſelves on a footing with Spain, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Holland and England, who all print Arabic.

(p) The Arabian Geographer calls it *the eaſtern branch*, becauſe Peluſa having been ſo often ſacked, and even totally deſtroyed by the Cruſaders, the canals which conveyed the water there, ceaſed to be frequented, and the Damietta branch became the oriental one.

favourably

favourably ſituated, opened the eyes of the Caliphs. In the year 244 of the hegira, *Elmetouakkel (q)* ſurrounded it with ſtrong walls. This obſtacle did not prevent the brave Roger, king of Sicily, from taking it from the Mahometans, in the year 550 of the hegira. He did not long enjoy his conqueſt. *Salab Eddin*, who about that period mounted the throne of Egypt, expelled the Europeans from Damietta. Fifteen years after, they returned to beſiege it, but this able Sultan baffled all their efforts. Notwithſtanding their land army was ſupported by a fleet of twelve hundred ſail *(r)*,

(q) Egypt ſaw ſome great works completed during the reign of this emperor, ſuch as the walls of Alexandria, thoſe of Damietta, the foundations of *Achmoun*, of Roſetta, of Cataiah, &c. They were executed by order of *Ebn Toulon*, one of the moſt celebrated Governors of this country. This grandee, burning with ambition, and the deſire of rendering himſelf independent, was deſirous of having ſome ſtrongholds, under ſhelter of which he might brave the power of the caliphs. No ſooner did he find himſelf ſtrongly fortified, than he hoiſted the ſtandard of rebellion, and being proclaimed King of Egypt, defended it againſt all the forces of Aſia.

(r) Macrizi, hiſtory of the dynaſties of Egypt.

they

they were obliged to make a diſgraceful retreat.

It was the fate of this place to be conſtantly beſieged. In the year 615 of the hegira, under the reign of *Eladel*, the cruſaders attacked it with a very conſiderable force. They landed on the weſtern ſhore of the Nile, and their firſt care was to ſurround their camp with a ditch and palliſado. The mouth of the river was defended by two towers, furniſhed with numerous garriſons. An enormous iron chain, ſtretching from one ſide to the other, hindered the approach of veſſels. The cruſaders carried by ſtorm the tower on the ſame ſide with their camp, broke the chain, and opened the entrance of the river for their fleet. *Nejm Eddin (s)*, the Sultan's ſon, who was encamped near Damietta, covered it with an army. To ſtop the enemies veſſels, he threw a bridge over the

(s) This valiant prince was then very young. He made his firſt campaigns againſt the Europeans, gained ſeveral victories over the Syrian rebels, and died at Manſoura ſome time after the taking of Damietta by Saint Lewis.

Nile. The Franks overturned it, and the prince adopted the meaſure of choking up the mouth of the river, which he almoſt rendered impaſſable, by ſeveral large boats he ſunk there. After alternate and various ſucceſſes, many bloody battles, and a ſiege of ſeventeen months, the Chriſtian princes took Damietta by ſtorm. They did not however long enjoy the fruit of ſo much blood ſpilt, and of an armament which had coſt immenſe ſums. Completely inveſted near the canal of *Achmoun (t)*, by the waters of the Nile, and by the Egyptian army, they purchaſed their lives and their liberty by the ſacrifice of their conqueſt.

One-and-thirty years after this defeat, Saint Lewis carried Damietta without ſtriking a ſtroke. The brilliant valour of a king who threw himſelf into the waves, in complete armour, to march to the enemy, entrenched upon the banks, and the vigour with which he attacked them, ſtruck a panic into their army. They took flight, and

(t) This canal is a quarter of a league to the northward of Manſoura. It is the ſame where Saint Lewis finiſhed his exploits.

ſhamefully

ſhamefully abandoned a fortreſs filled with ſtores, and capable of a long reſiſtance. The Arabs ſoon recovered it, as I ſhall have reaſon to mention in the hiſtory of the deſcent of Saint Lewis; but tired of keeping a place which continually drew upon them the moſt warlike nations of Europe, they totally deſtroyed it, and rebuilt it further up in the country. Abulfeda and all the oriental authors teſtify this fact. I ſhall lay before you the moſt important paſſages extracted from them.

" Damietta being deſtroyed, a ſmall " town was built at ſome diſtance, called " *Menchié*, which is become a conſiderable " place. In our days (one hundred years af- " ter its foundation) we ſee ſeveral ſquares, " market-places, and public baths. The " ancient city was raſed to the ground in the " year 648 *(u)* of the hegira. The Caliph " *Elmetouakkel*, of the family of the Abaſ- " ſides, built the walls. The misfortunes " it had occaſioned to the Mahometans,

(u) The other Arabian hiſtorians place this epocha four years farther back.

" the

" the wars to which it had given riſe, drove " them to that extremity. It ſeemed in " fact, as if this fortreſs invited in a " peculiar manner, the armies of the " Franks, its who alternately laid ſiege to " walls *(v)*."

Macrizi confirms Abulfeda, ſo as to leave no doubt. I ſhall give the paſſage of that hiſtorian, as tranſlated by the learned Mr. Cardonne; for when it is neceſſary to eſtabliſh a fact disfigured by the erroneous deſcriptions of a great many travellers, the demonſtration muſt be perfect.

" Two years after the departure of St. " Lewis, under the reign of *Moaz, Eddin* " *Aïbeh*, the Turcoman, the firſt ſultan " of the dynaſty of the Mamaluke Baha-

(v) " Tom khorabet, oua bena men bel carb ba- " lidé teſmi *elmenchié*. Oua hié médiné zat aſouak, " oua hamamat. Oua khorabet doumiat fi ſéné taman " oua arbaïn oua ſette maïat, oua canet aſouarha men " amarat *Elmetouakkel* el khalif el abaſſi. Can ſabab " tekhorabha mema caſſaat elmeſſemoun alaiha, men " echchedde marat bad akhi, be caſd el frang aïaha be " gemouahom marat bad akhi." *Abulfeda, deſcription of Egypt.*

" rites,

" rites, it being reported that the French " threatened Egypt a ſecond time, a reſo- " lution was taken to deſtroy Damietta. " This place was raſed to the ground, " ſo that there remained no veſtige of it, " except the great moſque *(x)*. The ruin " of Damietta did not free the Egyptians

(x) A large moſque is ſtill to be ſeen at the village of *Eſbé*, on the eaſtern bank of the Nile, a ſhort league from the ſea. I have made ten journeys to this place, the environs of which I have attentively examined. I remarked there the foundation of the walls of the ancient Damietta, the arch of a brick vault, of antique conſtruction, which probably ſupported the end of the bridge thrown over the river before this town; an old tower, half demoliſhed, on which are placed two guns without carriages, and other ruins, which leave me no room to doubt of its ſituation. As to the diſtance of a league which there is at preſent from Eſbé to the ſea, it is the diſtance gained by the Delta in the term of 600 years. This increaſe has obliged the Mamlouks to erect two ſmall forts beyond the village, to defend the entrance of the river. That which is on the left bank is already at half a league's diſtance in the land. The other, more modern, will ſoon undergo the ſame fate; for the bank on which it is built projects three leagues into the ſea, and as it is almoſt on a level with the water, it will form a promontory in leſs than a century.

" from

" from apprehenſion, and eleven years after,
" under the reign of *Bibar*, *Elbondouk Dari*,
" the mouth of the Nile was choked up,
" *(y)* to prevent the enemy's fleets from get-
" ting up the river. From that epocha
" its entrance is prohibited to all veſſels,
" which are now obliged to anchor in the
" road.

" The town of Damietta, at this day
" ſubſiſting, was built after the deſtruction
" of the ancient one. It is ſituated a lit-
" tle above on the ſame ſide."—And in fact, Sir, it is only a league and a half diſtant from the village of *Eſbé*, where the traces of the former are diſcoverable. The modern Damietta, firſt called *Menchié*, as Abulfeda tells us, has preſerved the memory of its origin in a ſquare ſtill called by that name. Writers in general have confounded theſe two towns, aſcribing to the

(y) Theſe two fillings up of the river have raiſed a terrible bar, which is called *Bogaz*, which is as dangerous as that of Roſetta, and is become impaſſable, even for boats, for ſeveral months of the year. Shipwrecks are frequent there. I have paſſed it four times, but not without running great riſks.

one

one the attributes of the other. The notes (z) at the bottom of the page will ſhew

(z) Father Sicard ſays; *Lake Menzalé commences at half a league from Damietta, formerly called Thamiatis,* Lettres edifiantes, p. 340. The Damietta he ſpeaks of is not *Thamiatis*; it was the ancient one.

Pocock, after ſpeaking of the modern Damietta, adds: *One ſees at the northern extremity of this town a large round tower, of rough ſtones, and very well built, which was done doubtleſs by the Mamalukes, after they had retaken Damietta from the Chriſtians.* Deſcription of the Eaſt, vol. firſt. The learned Engliſhman confounds the town deſtroyed by the Egyptians with that ſubſiſting in our days.

Proſper Alpinus falls into a much greater error, by miſtaking Damietta for the ancient Peluſium. *Deſcription d'Egypte*, p. 38. Damietta is 22 leagues from the ruins of Peluſium.

Mr. Maillet has committed the ſame fault. *The town of Damietta anſwers to that of the ancient Peluſium, which advanced half a league.* Deſcription d'Egypte, p. 127.

Doctor Shaw has copied the paſſage of Mr. Maillet, and adopted the ſame error. *Geographical obſervations on Syria and Egypt.*

Mr. Nieburh alſo, who has given an excellent plan of Damietta, confounds it with that which was raſed in the twelfth century, as may be ſeen by the following paſſage: *I have not diſcovered the ſmalleſt traces of*

the

ſhew you what great authorities had obſcured this point of hiſtory and geography.

It is time, Sir, to make you acquainted with the modern Damietta, where I paſſed fourteen months. This place, larger, and not leſs agreeable than Roſetta, is rounded in a ſemicircle on the eaſtern bank of the Nile, two leagues and a half from the mouth of it. The eye, placed at one of the extremities of the creſcent, takes in its whole extent. It is reckoned to contain 80,000 ſouls. It has ſeveral ſquares, the moſt conſiderable of which has retained the name of *Menchié*. The bazars are

the walls of Damiat; but the place where it is ſaid the Nile was blocked by a chain, ſeems to be ſtill diſcoverable; for on the northern bank within the town, there is an old and lofty tower. The river in this place is ſcarcely more than one hundred feet wide; (in this he is very much miſtaken) *and oppoſite to it, on the weſtern bank, is another tower ſimilar to it, of which every thing on the land ſide is already demoliſhed.* Journey into Arabia, vol. i. Theſe towers, which have made them take the modern for the ancient Damietta, were built by the Mamalukes for the defence of the new town. As they were uſeleſs, they have demoliſhed one, and employed its materials in the conſtruction of a ſmall fort which is at the mouth of the river.

filled with merchants. *Okals*, or *khans*, as ſpacious as thoſe of *Boulak*, collecting under their porticos the ſtuffs of India, the ſilks of mount Lebanon, ſal-ammoniac, and pyramids of rice, proclaim that it is a commercial town. The houſes, thoſe in particular which are on the banks of the river, are very lofty. They have in general handſome ſaloons built on the top of their terraces, which are cheerful belvideres, open to every wind, where the Turk, effeminately reclining on a ſopha, paſſes his life in ſmoking, in looking on the ſea, which bounds the horizon on one ſide, on the great lake that extends itſelf on the other, and on the Nile, which, running between them, traverſes a rich country. Several large moſques, adorned with lofty minarets, are diſperſed over the town. The public baths, lined with marble, are diſtributed in the ſame manner as thoſe of Grand Cairo. The linen you are ſerved with is clean, and the water very pure. The heat and the treatment in them, ſo far from injuring the health, ſerve to ſtrengthen, nay, even to improve it, if uſed with moderation.

tion. This cuſtom, founded on experience, is general in Egypt. The obſervations of ſeveral years, the aſtoniſhing effects ariſing from the uſe of them, compel me to look upon them as very ſalutary.

The port of Damietta is continually filled with a multitude of boats and ſmall veſſels. Thoſe called *Scherm* ſerve to convey the merchandize on board the ſhips in the road, and to unload them; the others carry on the coaſting trade. This town carries on a great trade with Syria, with Cyprus, and Marſeilles. The rice called *Mezelaoui*, of the fineſt quality there is in Egypt, is cultivated in the neighbouring plains. The exports of it amount annually to about ſix millions of livres. The other articles of the produce of the country, are linens, ſal-ammoniac, corn, &c. A ruinous policy for the country, prohibits the exportation of this laſt article; but the law is evaded, and it paſſes under the name of rice.

The Chriſtians of Aleppo and Damaſcus, ſettled in this town, have for ſeveral ages carried on its principal commerce. Turk-

iſh indolence, content with extorting from them from time to time, ſuffers them to become rich. The exportation of rice to foreign countries is prohibited, but by means of ſome *douceurs* to the cuſtom-houſe officers, the people of Provence load annually ſeveral ſhips with it. The *Bogaz* preventing them from entering the Nile, their cargoes are conveyed on board by the boats of the country. This inconvenience is the ſource of endleſs vexation and abuſes. The boat, which is loaded in the evening with rice of the firſt quality, is frequently not that which arrives at the ſhip; an inferior quality is ſubſtituted for it during the night. The Marſeilles captains, aware of theſe rogueries, without being able to prevent them, endeavour to play off trick againſt trick, ſo that this commerce has become a general ſcene of knavery. But the badneſs of the port is ſtill more detrimental to Damietta. The road where the veſſels lie being expoſed to every wind, the ſlighteſt gale obliges the captains to cut their cables, and take ſhelter at Cyprus, or to ſtand off to ſea. It would

would be eaſy, by cutting a canal only of half a league, to open a paſſage for ſhips into the Nile, where there is deep water. This work, which might be executed at very little expence, would render Damietta a noble harbour; but deſpotiſm, inſenſible to the intereſt of the people, is always ſurrounded by deſtruction in its progreſs, and wants both the will and the power to create. By what fatality is it, that the moſt beautiful country on the globe is deſtined for a prey to a handful of robbers, for whom public utility is nothing, and who ſport with the lives of their fellow creatures?

The tongue of land on which Damietta is ſituated, ſtraightened on one ſide by the river, and on the other by the weſtern extremity of lake *Menzalé*, is only from two to ſix miles wide, from eaſt to weſt. It is interſected by innumerable rivulets in every direction, which render it the moſt fertile ſpot in Egypt. The ſoil there produces, *communibus annis*, 80 buſhels of rice for one. The other produce is in the ſame proportion. It is there that nature, laviſhing profuſely her pomp and riches, preſents

flowers, fruits, and harveſts at every ſeaſon of the year. Winter never deprives it of theſe advantages; its beauties are never impaired by ſummer. Deſtructive heats, as well as chilling colds, are equally unknown in that happy ſpot. The thermometer varies only from nine to twenty-four degrees above the freezing point. *(a)* Damietta is indebted for this charming temperature to the immenſe quantity of water with which it is ſurrounded. At Grand Cairo the thermometer riſes twelve degrees higher.

The verdure is no where ſo freſh; the trees are no where covered with ſuch quantities of fruit. The rivulets around the fields of rice are lined with ſeveral kinds of reeds, ſome of which riſe to a great height. The reed *calamus* is there found in abundance, which is made uſe of for writing by the orientals. Its ſlender ſtalk bears long narrow leaves, which hang

(a) I have purſued theſe obſervations for a whole year, but only in the day time. In the night the cold does not much increaſe, for froſt, ice, and ſnow are not known at Damietta.

grace-

gracefully, and ſpreading branches covered with white flowers. I have there ſeen foreſts of papyrus, of which the ancient Egyptians made their paper. This triangular cane, nine feet high, and as thick as your thumb, is topped by a woolly tuft. Strabo, who calls it *Biblus (b)*, gives an accurate deſcription of it. It is there alſo that the *Lotus*, of which the Arabs have preſerved the primitive name of *Nuphar*, exalts its lofty ſtalk above the waters. Its large calix blows either of an azure

(*b*) "The papyrus grows ſpontaneouſly in Lower "Egypt. I have ſeen it on the banks of lake Ma-"ræotis. It is a cane whoſe bare ſtalk riſes about 10 "feet high. It bears at the top a woolly tuft. The "*publicans*, who farm that branch of commerce, only "ſuffer it to grow in very few places, to enhance "its value, and thereby injure the public intereſt."

Strabo, lib. 17.

It is the avidity of theſe *publicans*, it is their care in deſtroying it, that occaſions the ſcarcity of papyrus in Egypt. I only met with it in the neighbourhood of Damietta, and of lake *Menzalé*. Travellers in general, who have not viſited this intereſting part of Egypt, have not made mention of it. Others leſs circumſpect, have denied its exiſtence, and have circulated fables on the ſubject.

blue, or of a brilliant white, and it appears with the majeſty of the king of the aquatic plants. The marſhes and the canals in the interior parts of the country, are filled with this ſuperb flower, which diffuſes a moſt agreeable odour.

There are a great many villages around Damietta, in moſt of which are manufactures where the moſt beautiful linens of the country are fabricated. The fineſt napkins in particular are made there, fringed with ſilk. You are ſerved at table with them, but eſpecially on ceremonial viſits, when the ſlave preſents you with one to wipe your mouth with, after you have drank your ſherbet *(c)*, or ate the ſweetmeats, which are carried round on a ſilver

(c) *Sherbet* comes from the Arabic word *charbé*, which ſignifies drink. It is the nectar of the orientals. It is compoſed of lemon-juice, ſugar, and water, in which are diſſolved perfumed cakes, made of excellent Damaſcus fruit, in which is uſually infuſed ſome drops of roſe-water. It is a moſt agreeable liquor. Sherbet is only ſerved up amongſt the great, or men in office. On ſeveral viſits I have paid to the governors of Damietta, it was offered me, and I drank it with pleaſure.

plate to all the company. Theſe ſmall towns, generally ſurrounded with little woods, or trees promiſcuouſly planted, form a whimſical and picturesque aſſemblage. By the ſide of the ſycamore and the melancholy tamarind, one ſees the elegant caſſia-tree, with its cluſters of yellow flowers, like thoſe of the cytiſus. The top of the date-tree, loaded with enormous bunches, riſes above the grove. The caſſia, with its ſweet-ſcented flower, grows under its ſhade. The orange and lemon-tree cover the labourer's cabin with their golden fruit. The banana-tree, with its long leaves, the pomegranate, with its ſcarlet flower, and the fig-tree, with its ſugary fruit, throw a vaſt variety into theſe landſcapes. In walking through theſe winding paths, ſhaded on one ſide by theſe different trees, and lined on the other by a curtain of reeds, impenetrable to the eye, I frequently found myſelf on a ſudden on the banks of the great lake *Menzalé*. Here the proſpect was very different; thouſands of boats employed in fiſhing, or in ſpreading nets for the innumerable flocks of birds which

reſort

reſort there to ſeek abundant food, and a temperate climate.

I am deſirous, Sir, of painting nature to you, ſuch as I have ſeen it a thouſand times in the environs of Damietta; but I feel how much the painter is inferior to his model. Figure to yourſelf all the advantages ariſing from running ſtreams, all the freſhneſs of the moſt perfect verdure, all the perfumes of the orange-flower, the tranſcendent voluptuouſneſs of a ſoft, ſweet, and balſamic air, the delightful ſpectacle of the moſt beautiful ſky, and you will have an imperfect idea of this tongue of land between the great lake and the courſe of the Nile.

At a mile from this town, to the ſouth-weſt, is a grove of orange-trees, which ſerves as a walk for the inhabitants. The walks in it are formed in a ſtraight line. It is the only one where art has added any graces to nature, for every where elſe the trees are planted without any order. I uſed to go thither almoſt every day, particularly in the months of February, March, and April, when the orange-trees are in flower.

flower. I cannot expreſs to you the charms one experiences in reſpiring the cool air, and the perfumes under this cheerful ſhade. Theſe trees, which have never been mutilated by the ſciſſars, riſe above 30 feet high; their intermingled branches, their thick foliage intercepted all the rays of the ſun. They were flowered from the loweſt bough up to the very top. Each orange-tree formed a diſtinct bouquet, where the leaves were with difficulty diſtinguiſhed through the tufts of flowers. The whole together compoſed the moſt delightful canopy under which a mortal can repoſe. A little rivulet ran along each row, and a baſon was opened twice a day, to water them. When one walked there at noon, one was intoxicated with pleaſure. It was there, above all, that I experienced what a delicious enjoyment the ſenſe of ſmelling is capable of procuring. It was there that I diſcovered, that in warm climates, odours, ſo far from injuring, are not only ſalutary, but become neceſſary to the health.

At the end of this walk is a canal filled with papyrus. At the left, on entering, is the

the gardener's hut, and a clump of lemon and palm-trees, planted ſo near each other, that it is difficult to enter it. This ſpot, encloſed by ditches and paliſades, is the aſylum of myſtery. The moſt beautiful Turkiſh women ſometimes repair thither to enjoy, *as they ſay*, the balſamic air, below the ſhade of theſe trees.

I ſhall finiſh this letter, Sir, with a fact, which will prove to you, that the events which happened in the time of Jacob, are renewed in our days, in Egypt. Whole clouds of locuſts covered the plains of Syria the laſt year. They laid waſte the country, and deſtroyed the corn even to the very root. Famine was, as uſual, the conſequence of this ſcourge. A countryman in the neighbourhood of Damaſcus felt the effects of the general deſolation. To ſupply the urgent neceſſities of his family, he was daily obliged to ſell a part of his cattle. This reſource was very ſoon exhauſted; the unhappy father, borne down by the preſent calamity, foreſaw ſtill greater to come. Preſſed by hunger, he went to the town to ſell his implements of labour.

labour. The inviſible hand of Providence guided his footſteps, as the angel formerly conducted the young Tobias. Whilſt he was cheapening ſome corn newly arrived from Damietta, he heard tell of the ſucceſſes of *Mourat* Bey *(d)*, who, after vanquiſhing his enemies, had entered Grand Cairo in triumph. They painted the ſize, the character, the origin of this warrior. They related the manner in which he had ariſen from the ſtate of ſlavery to his preſent greatneſs. The aſtoniſhed countryman immediately knew him to be one of his ſons, carried off from him at eleven years old. A ray of hope revived in his breaſt. He loſt no time in conveying to

(d) Mourat Bey and *Ibrahim Bey* have been for the laſt ſeven years the two moſt powerful princes of Egypt. Ambition, which is their ruling paſſion, has diſunited them. They have been at war with each other. The equality of their forces again made them friends. At preſent, *Mourat Bey*, prevailing over his colleague, has obliged him to fly into Upper Egypt. The former reigns at Grand Cairo at this day. I ſhall give their characters, and the principal tranſactions reſpecting them which have happened under my eyes, in the ſequel of theſe letters.

his

his family the proviſions he had purchaſed, recounts what he had learnt, and determines to ſet out for Egypt. His wife and children bathed him with their tears, offering up their vows for his ſafe return. He went to the port of Alexandretta, where he embarked, and landed at Damietta.—A ſon who had quitted the religion of his forefathers to embrace Mahometiſm, and who ſaw himſelf encircled with all the ſplendor of the moſt brilliant fortune, is it likely that he will acknowledge him? This idea hung heavy on his heart. On the other hand, the deſire of reſcuing his family from the horrors of famine, the hopes of recovering a child, whoſe loſs he had long bewailed, ſupported his courage, and animated him to continue his journey. He enters the capital, and repairs to the palace of *Mourat Bey*. He preſents himſelf to the prince's attendants, and deſires permiſſion to ſpeak to him. He urges, he ardently ſolicits an audience: his dreſs, and his whole appearance, which beſpoke poverty and misfortune, were not calculated to obtain him what he ſought for; but his great

great age, that age ſo reſpected in the Eaſt, pleaded in his favour. One of his officers informed *Mourat Bey*, that a wretched old man deſired to ſpeak to him. "Let him "enter," ſays he. The peaſant advances with trembling ſteps on the rich carpet which covered the hall of the divan, and approaches the Bey, who was repoſing on a ſopha embroidered with ſilk and gold. The various feelings which oppreſſed his mind, deprived him of utterance. Recollecting at length the child that had been ſtolen from him, and the voice of nature getting the better of his fears, he throws himſelf at his feet, and embracing his knees, he cries out: "*You are my child.*" The Bey raiſes him up, endeavours to recollect him, and on a further explanation finding him to be his father, he ſeats him by his ſide, and loads him with careſſes. After the tendereſt effuſions of the heart, the old man painted to him the deplorable ſituation in which he had left his mother and his brethren. The prince propoſed to him to ſend for them to Egypt, and to make them partake of his riches and his power, pro-

vided

vided they would embrace Mahometiſm. The generous Chriſtian had foreſeen this propoſal, and fearing leſt young people might have been dazzled with it, had not ſuffered one of his children to accompany him. He ſtedfaſtly rejected therefore this offer of his ſon, and had even the courage to remonſtrate with him on his change of religion. *Mourat Bey*, ſeeing that his father remained inflexible, and that the diſtreſs his family was in demanded immediate ſuccour, ordered him a large ſum of money, and ſent him back into Syria with a ſmall veſſel laden with corn. The happy countryman returned as ſoon as poſſible to the plains of Damaſcus. His arrival baniſhed miſery and tears from his rural dwelling, and reſtored joy, comfort, and happineſs.

You ſee, Sir, that this fact bears ſome reſemblance to the hiſtory of Joſeph, which would poſſibly have been even more ſtriking, had one come at the knowledge of all the particulars.

I have the honour to be, &c.

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LETTER XXIV.

An inquiry concerning ancient Peluſium; unknown to modern travellers; its ſituation, and the epoch of its decline. An account of Farama, a place at a little diſtance, and where the Arabians place a monument, which ſeems to be that of Pompey the Great. Deſcription of the great lake of Tanis, now called Menzalé; with the iſlands and towns which were anciently built at this place. Obſervations on the fiſhing of this lake, its mouths in the Mediterranean, and the innumerable birds which aſſemble there, eſpecially in the winter.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

PELUSIUM, as I have already ſaid, Sir, was placed at the eaſtern extremity of lake *Menzalé*. Its name, which ſignifies *mud (e)*, proves its ſituation to be in the

(e) Πηλέσιον ſignifies mud; the Arabs have carried that appellation into their language, calling it *thineh*, mud.

midſt of marſhes. According to Strabo *(f)*, it was only two miles from the ſea. The period of its foundation, as well as that of the other ancient cities of Egypt, is loſt in the obſcurity of time. It flouriſhed long before Herodotus. As it commanded the entrance of the country on the ſide of Aſia, the Pharaohs rendered it a conſiderable fortreſs: one of them raiſed a rampart of thirty leagues in length from the walls of this town to Heliopolis; but we find from the hiſtory of nations that the long wall of China, thoſe which the weakneſs of the Greek emperors led them to build round Conſtantinople, and many others, built at an immenſe expence, were but feeble barriers againſt a warlike people; theſe examples have taught us that a ſtate, to be in ſecurity againſt a foreign yoke, muſt form warriors within itſelf, and that men muſt be oppoſed to men.

This rampart which covered Peluſium did not ſtop Cambyſes, who attacked it with a formidable army. The feeble cha-

(f) Strabo, lib. 17.

racter

racter of the ſon of Amaſis, unable to prevent the deſertion of two hundred thouſand Egyptians, who went to found a colony beyond the cataracts, had not force ſufficient to oppoſe that torrent which broke in upon his country. Cambyſes, after a bloody battle, wherein he cut his enemies to pieces, entered Peluſium in triumph. That memorable day, which ſaw the deſertion of one part of the Egyptian militia, and the ruin of the other, is the true epoch of the ſubjugation of that rich country. Since that period, it has paſſed under the yoke of the Perſians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, and the Turks. A continued ſlavery of more than two thouſand years ſeems to ſecure them an eternal bondage.

Herodotus, who viſited Peluſium ſome years after the conqueſt of Cambyſes, relates an anecdote, which I cannot omit: "I ſurveyed *(g)*," ſays he, "the plain "where the two armies had fought; it "was covered with human bones, collect-

(g) Herodotus, Thalia, lib. 3.

" ed in heaps. Thoſe of the Perſians " were on one ſide, thoſe of the Egyp- " tians on the other, the inhabitants of " the country having taken care to ſeparate " them after the battle. They made me " take notice of a fact, which would have " appeared very aſtoniſhing to me, without " their explanation of it. The ſkulls of " the Perſians, which were ſlight and fra- " gile, broke on being lightly ſtruck with " a ſtone; thoſe of the Egyptians, thicker " and more compact, reſiſted the blows of " flint. This difference of ſolidity they " attributed to the cuſtom the Perſians have " of covering their heads from their in- " fancy with the tiara, and to the Egyp- " tian cuſtom of leaving the heads of their " children bare and ſhaved, expoſed to the " heat of the ſun. This explanation ap- " peared ſatisfactory to me."

The ſame cuſtoms ſtill ſubſiſt in Egypt in our days; I have ſeen in all my travels the children of the common people, whether running about the plains, or collected round the villages, or ſwimming in the river, always with their heads bare and ſhaved.

ſhaved. When one reflects on the hardneſs the ſkull muſt acquire from being continually expoſed to the action of a burning ſun, we ſhall not be ſurpriſed at the remark of Herodotus.

Peluſium, after paſſing under the dominion of Perſia, was taken by Alexander. The brave Antony, general of cavalry under Gabinius, took it from his ſucceſſors, and Rome reſtored it to Ptolemy Auletes. Pompey, whoſe credit had eſtabliſhed this young prince on the throne of Egypt, after the fatal battle of Pharſalia, took refuge at Peluſium; he landed at the entrance of the harbour, and on quitting his wife Cornelia, and his ſon, he repeated the two following verſes of Sophocles: "The free man who ſeeks "an aſylum at the court of a king, will "meet with ſlavery and chains." He there found death. Scarcely had he landed on the ſhore, when Theodore, the rhetorician, of the Iſle of Chio, Septimius the courtier, and Achillas the eunuch, who commanded his troops, wiſhing for a victim to preſent to his conqueror, ſtabbed

him with their ſwords. At the ſight of the aſſaſſins, Pompey covered his face with his mantle, and died like a Roman. They cut off his head, and embalmed it, to offer it to Cæſar, and left his body naked on the ſhore. It was thus that this great man, whoſe warlike talents had procured the liberty of the ſeas for the Romans, and added whole kingdoms to their extended empire, was baſely ſlain in ſetting foot on the territory of a king who owed to him his crown. Philip, his freed man, collecting together, under favour of the night, the wreck of a boat, and ſtripping off his own cloak, to cover the ſad remains of his maſter, burnt them according to the cuſtom. An old ſoldier who had ſerved under Pompey's colours, came to mingle his tears with thoſe of Philip, and to aſſiſt him in performing the laſt offices to the manes of his general.

Peluſium was often taken and pillaged during the wars of the Romans, the Greeks, and the Arabs. But in ſpite of ſo many diſaſters, ſhe preſerved to the time of the Cruſades, her riches and her

commerce.

commerce. The Chriſtian princes having taken it by ſtorm, ſacked it. It never again roſe from its ruins, and the inhabitants went to Damietta, as I have mentioned in the preceding letter.

Farama, founded by the Arabs, a little to the eaſtward of Peluſium, took place of it. This town did not long ſubſiſt, for it was deſtroyed in the thirteenth century. Abulfeda *(h)*, who quotes *Ebn Haukal*, ſays, that the tomb of Galen was to be ſeen there. This is a miſtake; that celebrated phyſician was buried at Pergamos, his native country *(i)*. The mauſoleum the Arabian hiſtorian ſpeaks of, muſt be that of Pompey, which Pliny places at

(h) Deſcription of Egypt.

(i) Galen, after ſtudying medicine at the ſchool of Alexandria, went to Rome at the age of 34. His knowledge and his talents ſoon made him be diſtinguiſhed there. Marcus Aurelius, a correct judge of merit, made choice of him for his phyſician, and he held the ſame poſt under two of his ſucceſſors. Tired with living at court, Galen retired to Pergamos, his country, where he paſſed the remainder of his life in philoſophic retirement, and died at the age of 63.

ſome diſtance from Mount Caſius *(k)*. Abulfeda adds, on the credit of *Ebn Saïd*, that the iſthmus of Suez is only twenty-three leagues broad at this place, and that *Amrou* intended cutting it, to make a communication between the two ſeas. *Omar*, who had no marine, and who was afraid of giving the Grecian veſſels an entrance into the heart of his dominions, prevented the execution of this project. It is probable, that he who had conquered Egypt, and who had made a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, would alſo have completed this noble enterprize.

Quitting the *Peluſiac* branch, and travelling towards the weſt, along the ſea-coaſt, one falls in with the *Tanitic* mouth of the river. It derives this name from *Tanis*. This conſiderable town, built in an iſland of the lake, and the capital of a tribe, ſtill flouriſhed under the reign of Auguſ-

(k) Pliny the Naturaliſt, lib. 5. *ch.* 12. The ruins of *Farama* are in the neighbourhood of Mount Caſius. It appears that the tomb deſcribed by *Ebn Haukal*, is that of Pompey.

tus.

tus *(l)*. Abulfeda informs us, that it did not exiſt in his time, and that the iſle was uncultivated and deſart *(m)*.

During my reſidence at Damietta, ſeveral fiſhermen aſſured me they had ſeen in one of the iſlands of Menzalé, marbles, columns, and the ruins of large buildings. I had formed the project of going to viſit them; but the conſiderable expences the voyage would have coſt me, to purchaſe the governor's permiſſion, to procure one of his officers, and ſome janiſſaries to accompany me, obliged me to lay aſide the thoughts of it. I anxiouſly wiſh that ſome curious perſon, either richer than myſelf, or ſeconded by government, may ſurvey this great lake, ſound the depth of its outlets, deſcribe the precious morſels of antiquity it may contain, and in ſhort, do what not one of our modern travellers has ventured to undertake, and which my moderate fortune alone prevented me from carrying into execution. After the *Tanitic* comes, the *Mendeſian* mouth, which takes

(l) Strabo, lib. 17.

(m) Abulfeda, Deſcription of Egypt.

its

its name from the ancient city of *Mendes (n)*, famous for its temple, and the indecency of the worſhip paid there to the ram. Herodotus gives the following account of its origin *(o)*: "Hercules prayed "Jupiter with ardour to ſhew himſelf to "him. The God, deaf to his prayer, re- "fuſed him that favour. Overcome at "length by his intreaties, he conſented, "on condition that it ſhould be in the "ſhape of a ram. He covered him- "ſelf with the ſkin of that animal, and "appeared to the hero. To preſerve the "memory of this event, the Egyptians "repreſent Jupiter with a ram's head.... "When the ſacred animal dies, the *Men-* "*deſian* province ſolemnizes his death by "a general mourning."

Decency prevents me from giving the reſt of this paſſage. They who are curious to be better informed of the point of madneſs to which fanaticiſm will tranſport an ignorant and ſuperſtitious populace, may conſult the original.

(n) This Egyptian word ſignifies *Ram.* *Herodotus.*

(o) Herodotus, lib. 2. Euterpe.

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The traveller, who may be desirous of finding the ruins of *Mendes*, if he consults Herodotus and Strabo, must look for it at some distance from the canal of *Achmoun*, on the side of *Menzalé*.

Before one arrives at the *Phatnitic* branch, I have marked a new one on the map, which no geographer has taken notice of. I observed it in a voyage I made in that quarter, during the swelling of the Nile. It is about 50 feet wide. The current in it was very rapid, but I do not know whether it is very deep, or is filled the whole year. It is a natural outlet which the waters of the lake have made for themselves into the sea. It would be easy to turn a part of the river into this canal, and to open a passage for vessels into its bed. The *Phatnitic*, at present the *Damiettic* branch, is a league further on. The Delta commences here. Cape *Bourlos*, near which is the *Sebennytic* mouth, forms the most advanced point of it. The branch of Rosetta, formerly that of *Bolbitine*, terminates it. It extended formerly as far as the

the *Canopic* branch, which throws itſelf into the ſea near to *Aboukir*.

Theſe, Sir, are the ſeven mouths of the Nile, ſo celebrated by the poets *(p)*. They were all formerly navigable. Thoſe of Roſetta and of Damietta have alone preſerved that advantage. Some of them might indeed be opened; but in the preſent enfeebled ſtate of Egypt, her government ſeems more diſpoſed to ſhut her ports to ſtrangers, than to open new ones.

It now remains for me to give you ſome particulars, Sir, of the great lake, along whoſe borders you have been travelling. Strabo *(q)*, and the Arabian authors call it *Tanis*, on account of the town of that name. At preſent it is called *Menzalé*. Its water is freſh during the inundation, and becomes ſalt as the river returns into its bed. The ſame circumſtance was remarked in the time of the Caliphs. The

(p) Et ſeptem gemini turbant trepida oſtia Nili. *Virgil.*

Perque papyriferi ſeptemflua flumina Nili. *Ovid.*

(q) Strabo, lib. 17.

geographer

geographer of Nubia ſpeaks of it as follows (r): "The Nile overflowing its "banks at the ſummer ſolſtice, the ca- "nals which diſcharge themſelves into "Lake *Tanis*, render its waters freſh. The "ſea in its turn flows into it, and makes "them ſalt. In this lake are iſlands with "buildings in them like towns, ſuch as "*Nabli*, *Touna*, *Samnaa*, and *Haſſan-El-* "*ma*. They are only to be approached "in boats." It would be important to viſit theſe iſlands, which no modern traveller has ſeen, and where manuſcripts and precious monuments may poſſibly be found.

About 1200 boats, each of which pays forty livres annually to the Pacha's renter, are continually employed in fiſhing on the lake. Amongſt the various ſorts of fiſh

(r) Oua behire *Tanis* aza amed el Nil fi el ſeif azab maouha. Oua aza gezar fi elcheté ila aouan, el bahr rhaleb, ſe maleh maouha. Oua fiha meden metl elgezaïr tatheif elbehire, oua hie *Nabli*, oua *Touna*, oua *Samnaa*, oua *Haſſan el ma*; oua tarik ila ouahada menha ella belſafen. *Geographer of Nubia*, ſection 3.

it

it furniſhes, there are ſome moſt excellent, ſuch as the *queïage*, the *gemal*, the ſourd, the ſole, and the gold-fiſh. The quailty of the water gives them a white fleſh, and a fine delicate flavour. They are ſold freſh at Damietta, and the neighbouring towns. They are carried there in ſuch quantities, that a large ſole, or gold-fiſh coſts only four ſols, (or two pence).

The *bourri*, or mullet, procures of all others the moſt profit to the fiſhermen. They gut the females, and take out the ſpawn, with which they make *(s) Boutargue*, or *Botargo*, ſalt them, and ſend them throughout Egypt. Lake *Menzalé* having ſeveral communications with the Nile and the Mediterranean, and being full of reeds, iſlands, herbs, and inſects, both river and ſea-fiſh flock thither in abundance, and multiply without end. Two thouſand perſons are annually employed in the fiſhery, and

(s) Boutargue is made of the roes of the mullet, ſalted, and dried in the ſun. It is a diſh well known to the French ſeamen of Provence.

thouſands

thouſands of birds conſtantly feed upon them without producing any ſenſible diminution. Nature has given Egypt ſo favourable a ſituation, that the earth and the waters are both inconceivably productive. This charming country has for this reaſon been at all times the nurſing mother of all the neighbouring nations.

The waters of Lake *Menzalé* are covered with wild geeſe, ducks, teals, plungers, and ibiſes. I have killed ſeveral ibiſes in the marſhes near Roſetta; they have long feet, a ſlender body, alternately black and white, and a long neck. They live on fiſh, frogs, and reptiles. This lake feeds alſo a number of cormorants, grey and white herons, golden-ſnipes, rice-hens, cranes, chevaliers, &c.

The birds which principally attract attention, are the ſwan with ſilver plumage, ſailing gracefully on the ſurface of the waters, the flaman, with his roſe and black coloured wings, and the ſuperb pelican. This latter ſurpaſſes all the reſt by the majeſty of his carriage, his lofty ſhape, and the whiteneſs of his plumage,

mage, in which he may diſpute the palm even with the ſwan. When he goes about, amidſt that crowd of birds collected on the lake, he raiſes his head, crowned with a plume of feathers, far above them all, and ſeems to be their king. Nature has furniſhed him with a beak extremely ſtrong, with which he carries off large fiſh. The Arabs have the ſkill to tame him, and break him in to fiſh for them. The only pelican of the ſame kind with thoſe in Egypt, I ever ſaw in France, is at the king's menagerie at Verſailles. Although a long captivity, and a ſmall baſon, where he has ſcarcely room to move himſelf, have robbed him of a great deal of his beauty, one ſtill ſees, from his majeſtic ſhape, and the whiteneſs of his plumage, that he is a ſuperb bird.

I have pointed out to you, Sir, the principal ſpecies of the birds found on Lake *Menzalé*; but it is impoſſible for me to deſcribe to you, the variety of their colours, the diverſity of their cries, and the prodigious multitude there is of them, as far

far as the ſight extends, the waters are covered with them. At every inſtant one ſees innumerable flocks of them, deſcribing vaſt circuits in the air, then gradually deſcending, and lighting on the water; others flying from the approach of the fiſhermen, riſe by thouſands, to go in ſearch of that ſolitude they are fond of. Some are ſwimming in flocks, attended by their numerous families; others are on the wing, bearing in their beaks the prey they have been catching.

This continual motion, this immenſe liquid plain, furrowed by the lighteſt breeze; the iſlands, whoſe ſummits, gilded by the ſun, ſhew themſelves at a diſtance; the boats ſailing from one to the other; the banks ſhaded with trees, lined with villages, and clad in an eternal verdure; all theſe objects preſent a charming ſpectacle, which I have enjoyed a hundred times, and always with the greateſt pleaſure.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXV.

Expedition of Saint Lewis in Egypt, extracted from Joinville and the Arabian writers, with his route delineated in a chart. A narrative of his deſcent near the Giſé of Damietta, his victory over the troops of the Sultan of Egypt; the taking of Damietta; the march of his army along the great branch of the Nile, to the canal of Manſoure; the attempts which they made to paſs it; the dangerous paſſage of this canal. The victory and the defeat which followed. The death of Count d'Artois. The capture of St. Louis and his whole army; the maſſacre of Touran Check, ſovereign of Egypt; the ranſom of the French monarch, and his departure for S. Jean d'Acre, with the character of that prince, as delineated by the Infidels.

To Mr. L. M.

Damietta.

I NOW ſend you, Sir, Saint Lewis's expedition into Egypt, extracted from Joinville,

Joinville, and the Arabian authors, and verified by myſelf upon the ſpot.

Saint Lewis had wintered in the iſle of Cyprus with the greateſt part of his troops. The remainder of the army was to join him at the general rendezvous before Damietta. The day after Whitſunday, he ſet ſail from the point of Limaço, accompanied by eighteen hundred veſſels great and ſmall. The Mediterranean had not beheld a more formidable ſquadron from the days of the Perſians. The ſea was covered with veſſels to a vaſt extent. During the voyage, the Prince of the Morea and the Duke of Burgundy joined the royal fleet, which, after a paſſage of four days, anchored in the road of Damietta.

Nejm Eddin, of the family of the Aioubites, at that time governed Syria and Egypt. Frequent wars carried on for many years againſt the Cruſaders, the Charaſmians, and the inhabitants of Damaſcus, had taught him the art of war. Several victories gained over their different enemies, ſtrengthened at once his power, and eſtabliſhed his authority over his ſoldiers. As politic as

he was brave, he knew how to wield the ſword, without ſlackening the reins of government. Whilſt he was occupied with the plan of a campaign, he could dictate his orders to his miniſters, for the internal management of his kingdom, and anſwered himſelf all the memorials that were preſented to him. Such, according to Abulfeda, was the king St. Lewis had to contend with. On the arrival of the French in the iſle of Cyprus, he had quitted Syria, and not doubting that the ſtorm which threatened the Mahometans, would fall on Damietta, he had added new fortifications to that important place. After providing it with a numerous garriſon, with proviſions, and warlike machines, proper to ſupport a long ſiege, he was conveyed to *Achmoun Tanis*, to obſerve the motions of the enemy. Notwithſtanding he was dangerouſly ill, he neglected nothing which might contribute to baffle their deſigns. He ſent *Facr Eddin* with a conſiderable body of cavalry to oppoſe the landing of the French. This general

general was poſted near the Giza *(t)* of Damietta, between the weſtern bank of the Nile and the ſea, ſo as to have it eaſily in his power to prevent the diſembarkation.

From the fleet, the Egyptian army was ſeen drawn out in good order, at two hundred paces from the beach. Their unfolded colours were flying in the wind; their glittering armour reflected the rays of the ſun. A confuſed noiſe of drums and trumpets was heard. This warlike train had a commanding appearance, and ſtruck terror into the troops on board the fleet. The king called together his barons, to conſult them on the meaſure to be purſued; they adviſed him to wait for the remainder of his troops before he attempted a deſcent, in face of an enemy well intrenched. St.

(t) Gizé, as I have already ſaid, means *angle, extremity*. It was the moſt diſtant ſuburb of Damietta, ſituated on the other ſide of the Nile. An elevation of ſtones and ruins ſtill point out its ſite. It is oppoſite to the little village of *Eſbé*. The bridge before Damietta began at that place. I have carefully obſerved theſe places in ſeveral journeys I have made, and I have marked them on the map.

Lewis rejected this puſillanimous counſel, repreſenting to them that the road *(u)* of Damietta being expoſed to every wind, ſhould a ſtorm ariſe, the fleet would certainly be diſperſed, or driven upon the coaſt. He ordered every thing to be prepared, therefore, for the deſcent the next morning, and commanded them to attack the Egyptians, if they did not refuſe battle.

On Friday, the 4th of June, 1249, the French army, getting into their boats, made towards the ſhore. The inſtant they landed the enemy's cavalry poured down upon them; but the ſoldiers fixed their bucklers in the ſand, and preſenting their ſpears, formed an impenetrable wall of points. This intrepid countenance checked the impetuoſity of the Mahometans. They contented themſelves with parading round the batallions, and throw-

(u) The French fleet could not enter the Nile, the entrance of which was choked up by the Egyptians. The road of Damietta being very dangerous, St. Lewis adopted the moſt prudent, as well as the boldeſt meaſure.

ing

ing their javelins at them. As ſoon as the king beheld the royal ſtandard of France flying on the ſhore, he leaped out of his boat into the ſea, and marched againſt the enemy ſword in hand, and up to his armpits in the water. The French, encouraged by his preſence, fell on the Egyptians, and fought a bloody battle, in which they had all the honour. Two Emirs remained on the field of battle. This loſs, and ſo bold a deſcent, frightened *Facr Eddin*. He paſſed at night the bridge of Damietta, and made a precipitate retreat. At ſight of this, a panic ſeized the garriſon. They ſhamefully abandoned the rampart of Egypt, and all the inhabitants eſcaped under cover of the darkneſs. The French entered it the next morning without reſiſtance. In this manner was a city taken in one day, which one-and-thirty years before had ſuſtained a ſiege of ſixteen months.

On Sunday the French colours were diſplayed on the towers of Damietta. Great ſtores of ammunition was found there, and a vaſt quantity of arms. The victors having returned thanks to heaven for this

fortunate conqueſt, deliberated whether they ſhould not immediately purſue their march to Grand Cairo. And this certainly was the wiſeſt meaſure. The waters of the Nile, then very low, would have preſented fewer obſtacles; but Saint Lewis wiſhed to delay his departure till the arrival of the Count of Poitiers, his brother, who was leading the arriere ban of France. It was decided therefore to wait for him at Damietta.

The capture of this important port ſpread a general conſternation through Grand Cairo; the inhabitants thought they already ſaw the enemy at their gates. The Sultan's illneſs ſtill added to their fears. The alarm was ſo great, that the moſt timid fled towards Upper Egypt, whilſt others, more brave, animated by the love of their country, came to increaſe the army of *Nejm Eddin*. This unforeſeen reverſe of fortune did not diſhearten a prince accuſtomed to the events of war. He ſtruck off the heads of fifty of his principal officers, who had ſo baſely abandoned their poſts. He did not venture to inflict the

puniſhment

puniſhment of death on *Facr Eddin*, for fear of exciting a rebellion amongſt his troops, by whom he was much eſteemed. He contented himſelf with reprimanding him, and ſending him to Manſoura; he endeavoured to put it in a ſtate of defence. His whole army worked for this purpoſe. Having pitched his camp between the canal of *Achmoun* and that town, he reſolved to wait for the enemy in that advantageous poſt, and to ſtop them at the paſſage of the river; he even ſent ſome ſquadrons of light cavalry to haraſs the French camp.

A valuable moment was loſt in waiting for the Count of Poitiers. The Egyptians availed themſelves of it to fortify themſelves, and to collect all their forces. They had already recovered from their terror, and had frequent ſkirmiſhes in the neighbourhood of the French camp. The Arabs uſed to enter it in the night, make priſoners, and kill thoſe whom they could not carry off. It was thus they cut off the head of the Seignior of Courcenay, after killing the centinel who was placed at the entrance of his tent. The king made them

them encircle the camp with deep ditches, and placed archers on foot around it, who mounted guard during the night.

The favourable ſeaſon for marching into Upper Egypt was ſlipping away, and the time approaching when the Nile, ſwelling every day, fills the canals which interſect the plain, and renders the progreſs of an army very difficult in the face of the enemy, who can impede it at every ſtep. To accelerate the arrival of the Count of Poitiers, the legate, according to the cuſtom of the times, ordered proceſſions for three ſucceſſive Saturdays, from Damietta to the ſea, which were executed with great pomp. The king and his nobles aſſiſted at them. At length the prince fortunately arrived, and diffuſed joy with him throughout the camp. As ſoon as he was landed, Saint Lewis aſſembled his barons, to concert meaſures. They were divided in opinion. The nobles in general, and count Peter of Britany, were for immediately marching to lay ſiege to Alexandria, one of the keys of Egypt. They repreſented that that town had an excellent harbour, where the

fleet

fleet might ride in ſafety all the winter, and that the army employed in the conqueſt of the country, would by that means be well ſupplied with proviſions, and every neceſſary ſuccour; they added, that ſhips neither being able to enter the Nile, nor remain in the road, the French ran the riſk of periſhing with hunger, if unfortunately they ſhould experience a change of fortune. Theſe reaſons were very cogent, but the Comte d'Artois was of a different opinion. He ſaid, that when you wiſh to kill the ſerpent, you muſt cruſh his head, and adviſed the marching ſtraight to the capital of Egypt. Saint Lewis rejected the counſel of his barons, to purſue that of his brother. He did not reflect on the difficulties he ſhould have to meet with; and the departure was reſolved on.

Nejm Eddin died on the 22d of November. He was carried off in the flower of his age by an abſceſs in his lungs. The Sultana *Chegeret Eddour*, whoſe underſtanding raiſed her above her ſex, was not diſpirited by this misfortune, and applied herſelf to the means of ſaving the ſtate. Having

ſent

ſent for *Facr Eddin*, generaliſſimo of the troops, and the eunuch *Dgemal Eddin*, who was poſſeſſed of great authority, ſhe entreated them to aid her in ſupporting the weight of the crown, and in keeping the death of the Sultan ſecret until the arrival of his ſon *Touran Chah*, who was in the Diarbekir. Couriers were diſpatched to him. The Sultan's ſervice was carried on as if he had been living, and orders were given in his name throughout Egypt. This policy prevented the troops from loſing courage, and, by concealing the death of *Nejm Eddin* from the enemy, hindered them from profiting by a circumſtance ſo favourable to their deſigns.

The French army *(x)* quitted the plains

(t) The hiſtorian Macrizi, who almoſt always agrees with Joinville, fixes, as he does, the departure of the French to the month of December, but he attributes it to the news of the Sultan's death. Now it is certain that the French were not apprized of it until they were encamped near Manſoura, and that the arrival of the Count of Poitiers was the real cauſe of that bold and dangerous march in the time of the inundation. Thus it is that hiſtorians in reporting real facts, frequently miſtake the motives that produced them.

of

of Damietta at the beginning of Advent, and encamped the 7th of December at *Fareſcour*, where it kept its ſtation, to ſhut up a canal, which, leaving the river, throws itſelf into Lake *Menzalé*. This was eaſily effected, by forming a dyke at its entrance. *Facr Eddin* ſent 500 horſemen well mounted, to diſpute the paſſage of the river with the French. They poſted themſelves on the oppoſite bank. Notwithſtanding the firm countenance they ſhewed, the Knights Templars paſſed the firſt, and the king having forbid them to march againſt the enemy, they only thought of forming their ranks. This prudent conduct inſpired the Arabs with courage, taking it for the effect of fear. They made a furious attack on the Templars, and overthrew one of theſe brave warriors, at the feet of Brother Renaut de Bichiers, their marſhal. The ſight of this inflamed his indignation, inſomuch, that, no longer able to moderate his courage, he cried out: "*By God, let us fall upon them. "I can bear it no longer.*" The whole corps move in an inſtant, and ruſh on the Egyptians,

Egyptians, who were unable to ſuſtain the ſhock. Their ranks were broken. Part of the cavalry remained on the field of battle, and the reſt threw themſelves into the river, where they periſhed. Unfortunately, this very ſucceſs encouraged diſobedience, and was the cauſe of all the ſubſequent diſgraces of the French.

The army encamped the ſame day at *Scherimſah*, a village not far off, without being troubled by the enemy. It continued to make very ſhort days journeys, as it was perpetually obliged to fill up arms of the river, or large rivulets. It encamped at length at *Baramoun*, and it was not until the 19th of December that it appeared before *Manſoura*. The canal of Achmoun was between the town and the French army. It was neceſſary to paſs it to attack the enemy, who was intrenched on the oppoſite ſide *(y)*, and to become maſters of that important place.

A fleet

(y) In the map annexed to the beautiful edition of Joinville, printed at the Louvre, by order of the king, the canal of *Achmoun* is placed beyond Manſoura. This

A fleet of large boats accompanied the army, and abundantly ſupplied it. There were continual engagements by land and water. The arm of *Achmoun* is as large as the Saone, but much deeper. Its banks in general are very ſteep. It was impoſſible for the army to ſwim over it in preſence of all the forces of Egypt. It was reſolved to build a dyke there. Baliſtas and other machines for throwing ſtones were prepared; and to cover the workmen two wooden towers were built with covered galleries, at the head of the cauſeway. But inſtead of beginning at the mouth of the canal, as at *Fareſcour*, it was undertaken half a league lower. This want of ſkill rendered its execution impoſſible; for in proportion as they advanced, the Egyptians on their ſide opened deep trenches, which ſuddenly conveying the waters of the river againſt the dyke, overthrew it, and deſtroyed, in one moment,

This unlucky poſition, as contrary to the truth as it is to the underſtanding of the hiſtory, might induce a belief that the French came from Upper Egypt to beſiege that town, otherwiſe they would not have met with the canal in their paſſage.

the

the work of many weeks. This ill ſucceſs did not diminiſh the patience of the engineers, and they perſevered in executing the plan they had propoſed. Whilſt they were labouring with zeal, *Facr Eddin* landed privately ſome troops at *Scherimſah*. They made an unforeſeen attack on the camp, and occaſioned ſome confuſion. Joinville, who with the Templars, guarded it on the ſide of Damietta, armed himſelf immediately, marched againſt the enemy, and repulſed them. This event induced Saint Lewis to draw a ditch from the canal of *Achmoun* to the Nile, and this precaution ſecured the camp from any future ſurpriſes.

The labour at the dyke was continued to no purpoſe. The enemy, emboldened, came a ſecond time to attack the French in their camp. The count of Anjou had a rough ſkirmiſh with them, wherein they were again repulſed with loſs. They then fell upon the ſide defended by the count of Poitiers; but the vigorous reſiſtance they met with obliged them to retire. Theſe croſſes did not diſcourage them. Bodies

of

of Arabian cavalry were perpetually in motion round the camp, and carried off every perſon who ventured to ſtray out of it. The impracticable dyke could not be completed. The Egyptians ſhowered ſtones upon the workmen; their wildfire had ſtill better ſucceſs. They frequently poured it forth, and ſet fire to the towers and galleries, in ſpite of every effort to prevent it. Joinville, who was one night on guard at the head of the dyke, gives us a terrible deſcription of this wildfire. "This fire," ſays he, "that they launched at us, was "as large as a barrel, and had a long "flaming tail. It made a noiſe like thun-"der in paſſing through the air, and ap-"peared like a flying dragon. The light "it diffuſed was ſo great, that one could "ſee throughout the whole camp, as if "it was broad day." This dreadful fire-work conſumed every ſubſtance it fell on, without its being poſſible to extinguiſh it.

The burning of the towers and galleries however, did not make them abandon an ill-conceived project. All the wood that could be found in the boats was taken, and

employed in forming new works. They met with the fate of the former, nor could all the valour of the French ſave them from this wildfire. This laſt failure ſpread deſpair throughout the camp, and deprived them of all hope of paſſing the canal of *Achmoun*. Whilſt they were deliberating whether they ſhould return to Damietta, the Conſtable Hymbert de Beaujeu came to inform the king that a Bedouin *(z)* had promiſed to diſcover a ford to him, on condition of receiving 500 beſants of gold. The prince conſented, and the ford being pointed out, it was determined that the duke of Burgundy ſhould remain to guard the camp, whilſt St. Lewis and his three brothers ſhould engage the Egyptians.

On the 8th of February, 1250, the whole French cavalry, conducted by the Bedouin, collected at the ford, which was two leagues from the Nile, at break of day. They deſcended to the place. The

(z) Bedouin comes from the word *Bedaoui*, which ſignifies *Inhabitant of the Deſart*. It is the name aſſumed by the wandering Arabs.

water

water was deep (a), and the horſes ſwam towards the middle of the canal. Having got ground, they eaſily reached the oppoſite ſhore. Several cavaliers, amongſt whom was John of Orleans, were drowned in this dangerous paſſage. About three hundred Arabs who came to defend it were ſoon diſperſed. St. Lewis had given orders that the Templars ſhould march at the head of his army, and that the Comte d'Artois ſhould ſupport them with the corps he commanded; but on ſeeing the enemy fly, he could not moderate his ardour, and ruſhed upon them. The grand-maſter of the Templars ſent to beg him to ſtay, ſaying, that it was he who was to march the firſt. He conjured the prince not to diſhonour him by depriving him of a poſt entruſted to his valour. The Comte d'Artois liſtened to this wiſe remonſtrance,

(a) Joinville and Macrizi agree in ſaying that the Nile was then at the higheſt, which is extraordinary; for in that ſeaſon its waters are very low. The Arabian hiſtory, 'tis true, furniſhes us with ſome ſuch inſtances. The inundation is ſometimes retarded one month or two.

without venturing to reply. Unfortunately Fourcaut du Merle, a brave eſquire, who was holding the bridle of his horſe, was deaf; and not hearing what had been ſaid to the Prince, continued to advance, crying with all his ſtrength; *Now for them. Now for them.*

The Templars finding their repreſentations fruitleſs, thought it incumbent on their honour to reſume their ranks. They put ſpurs to their horſes, and go up to the enemy full gallop. The Egyptians, terrified at this unforeſeen attack, took flight in every quarter, and abandoned their camp. Theſe brave but imprudent cavaliers, overthrowing every thing that reſiſted them, arrive at Manſoura, force one of the gates, and penetrate into the town. *Facr Eddin*, who was at that inſtant in the bath, had ſcarce time to put on his clothes. He leaped on horſeback without ſaddle or bridle, and collecting ſome of his ſlaves, tried to ſtem the torrent. He and his companions fell covered with wounds. The attack was ſo briſk, and the rout of the enemy ſo rapid, that the

Comte

Comte d'Artois was in Manſoura with the Templars, before part of the army had paſſed the ford. Had all the troops been united at that moment; could the victors have received a timely ſuccour, the defeat of the enemy had been complete. Manſoura, and perhaps all Egypt would have fallen. But there was a diſtance of two leagues between the van-guard and the reſt of the French army. *Bibars elbondouk dari*, chief of the *Baharite* ſlaves *(b)*, perceived this error,

(b) Nejm Eddin, of whom I have ſpoken, beſieged Napoulous, a town in Syria. His troops forſook him. The Baharite ſlaves alone ſuſtained the ſhock of the enemy, and gave the Prince time to ſave himſelf. This ſervice called for, and obtained them his confidence. Called ſoon after to the throne of Egypt, in the room of his brother *Melec eladel Seif Eddin*, he laviſhed his favours on them, and raiſed them to the firſt dignities in the ſtate. This prince quitted the caſtle of Salah Eddin, the uſual reſidence of the Sultans, to inhabit that which he built in the iſland of *Raouda*, oppoſite to Old Cairo. He committed the guard of it to his favourite ſlaves; and as the Arabs call all great rivers, *bahar*, or *ſea*, they took the name of *Baharites*, or *maritime*. Having aſſaſſinated *Touran Chah*, the laſt of the family of the Aioubites, they reigned

error, and availed himſelf of it like a ſkilful general. Rallying the fugitives, and collecting round him the *elite*, or flower of the Egyptian cavalry, he threw himſelf between the town and the body of the French army, and cut off their communication. Whilſt he was combating their divided forces, and ſtopping the progreſs of Saint Lewis, the Count of Poitiers, and the Count of Anjou, the Egyptians, animated by his example, took courage, and attacked the cavaliers, who very imprudently engaged them in the narrow ſtreets of Manſoura. The inhabitants ſeconded them with great ſucceſs, by ſhowering ſtones on them from the roofs of the houſes. Thus aſſailed on all ſides, the French gave way: two thirds of the Templars, and near three

over Egypt and Syria for 136 years, and had 27 kings. The Baharites were of Turkiſh origin. Nejm Eddin purchaſed them of the Syrian merchants. They were dethroned in their turn by the *Mamalukes*, or Circaſſian ſlaves, in the year 784 of the hegira. Theſe formed a new dynaſty, which kept poſſeſſion of Egypt until the conqueſt of Selim, Emperor of the Ottomans, which happened in the year 923 of the hegira.

hundred

hundred cavaliers loſt their lives. The Comte d'Artois, after performing prodigies of valour, fell, covered with wounds, in the midſt of a heap of dead, and of almoſt all the officers who accompanied him, an unhappy victim to the diſobedience of the orders of his ſovereign.

Joinville and ſeveral brave cavaliers had taken refuge in a ruined houſe, from whence they courageouſly defended themſelves againſt an hoſt of enemies. In ſpite of their bravery, however, they had no proſpect of eſcaping death. The greateſt part of them were dangerouſly wounded. In this imminent danger, Erart de Severey, who had received a ſtroke of a ſabre on his face, and who was loſing all his blood, ſaid to them; "Chevaliers, if you will "aſſure me that myſelf and my deſcendants "ſhall be free from any blemiſh, I will "go and demand the aſſiſtance of the "Comte of Anjou, whom I ſee there in "the plain." They all concurred in beſtowing eulogiums on his reſolution. He mounts his horſe, paſſes through the enemy's ſquadrons, reaches the prince, who no ſooner

heard his report, than he turned his horſe, and flew to relieve Joinville and his troop. They owed their lives to this Seignior, full of honour, who, on the point of dying, was afraid of carrying into the tomb with him the ſhame of abandoning his companions, although he only quitted them for the purpoſe of obtaining aſſiſtance.

The main body of the army commanded by St. Lewis advanced into the plain, and ſuſtained the ſhock of all the Turkiſh and Arabian cavalry. The prince, mounted on a beautiful horſe, appeared like a hero in the midſt of his ſquadrons. His head was covered with a gilded helmet. He bore in his hand a German ſword. All his arms were ſplendid. The firmneſs he diſplayed in the midſt of carnage animated his warriors. The French and the Egyptians were ſo cloſely engaged, that they could only make uſe of the club, the battle-axe, and the ſabre. Whilſt he was checking the *elite* of the enemy's cavalry, John de Valery adviſed him to fall back to the right, towards the river, that he might receive ſuccour from the duke of Burgundy,

dy, and avoid being ſurrounded. His generals, whom he conſulted, approved of this advice. Orders were immediately given to the officer who bore the royal ſtandard, to turn towards the canal. This movement expoſed the advanced troops. Scarcely had he fallen back a few paces before the Count of Poitiers, and the Duke of Flanders ſent to inform the king that they were loſt if he did not return, and give them time to rejoin him. He halted. At this very inſtant Hymbert de Beaujeu came to acquaint him that the Comte d'Artois, ſurrounded by enemies, was ſtill defending himſelf in a houſe at Manſoura, but that his death was inevitable without immediate ſuccour. "Go," ſays the king to him, "I will follow you." In an inſtant the Conſtable, Joinville, and ſome cavaliers detach themſelves, and fly towards the town. They had ſcarcely got a quarter of a league, before a large body of the enemy, throwing themſelves between them and Saint Lewis, prevented them from paſſing any further. Joinville ſeeing that it was impoſſible either to join the

corps

corps in battle, or to penetrate to Mansoura, where the Turks were masters, proposed to the Constable to take possession of a bridge over a large rivulet, to prevent the enemy from attacking the French in the rear. Hymbert de Beaujeu accepted the offer, and six cavaliers made it a point of duty to hinder the enemy from passing it. Whilst they guarded the end of the bridge, the different corps of the Christian army separated, and, surrounded by the Mahometans, were roughly pressed towards the canal. A great number of cavaliers, thinking all was lost, threw themselves into it; but their horses, fatigued, could not reach the opposite side. In an instant the waters were covered with arms and drowned cavaliers. St. Lewis was in danger of his life. His troops had abandoned him. Six Turks, laying hold of his bridle, were leading him off a prisoner. This perilous situation did not affect his courage; on the contrary, collecting his strength, and making a skilful use of his excellent arms, he himself laid low these six enemies. This heroic

action

action ſtopped the fugitives. They were aſhamed of abandoning a king who defended himſelf with ſo much bravery. His knights returned in crowds around him, and as if this prodigy had given them freſh valour, they renewed the combat with fury, and repulſed the conquerors.

During theſe tranſactions, Joinville and the Conſtable kept their poſt, and preſently Count Peter of Britany arrived from Manſoura, his face covered with blood, with a ſquadron, the greateſt part of which, both officers and ſoldiers, were dangerouſly wounded. The Turks were in cloſe purſuit of them. Hymbert de Beaujeu and his little troop flew to meet them, and reſcued their friends. Joinville invited the count of Soiſſons, his couſin, to remain with him to guard the bridge, and prevent the Mahometans from attacking the French rear. This brave knight accepted the propoſal, and the Conſtable, finding them determined to guard that important poſt, went in ſearch of a reinforcement. Peter de Neville, ſurnamed Cayet, joined them. Theſe three cava-

liers,

liers, with refted fpears, and covered with their bucklers, defended this paſſage againſt every enemy who tried to force it.

Before them were two valiant guards of the king, called William de Boon, and John de Gamaches, whom the Turks could not oblige to retreat an inch. The arms of theſe generous warriors were covered with darts. Peter de Neville received there a wound on the head with a club. Joinville was wounded with five ſpears, and his horſe with fifteen. Whilſt they were thus expoſed to a thouſand perils, the count of Soiſſons, who was a ſtranger to fear, ſaid jocularly to Joinville, "Seneſchal, let us laugh at the ſhouts of "that mob; by the coif of God; (that "was his favourite oath) we ſhall ſtill "talk of this day's work in the chambers "of the ladies." This trait proves that gallantry was at all times the companion of French bravery.

The Conſtable kept his word with the brave men he had left at the bridge. He brought them ſuccour towards the evening, and

and they drove off the enemy. They went to rejoin the king, who, as well as his ſoldiers, had fought the whole day without taking any nouriſhment. Night was approaching, and the combatants on both ſides retired. The Sire de Chatillon commanded the rear guard, and the French army, in poſſeſſion of the Egyptian camp, and their warlike machines, paſſed the night there. It was divided into two camps, one of which, guarded by the duke of Burgundy, was to the north of the canal, and the other to the ſouth. This fatal day, which coſt the Comte d'Artois his life, as well as a great many nobles, would have ſeen the capture of Manſoura, and the total defeat of the Egyptians, had the whole French army at once given battle. The Arabian writers themſelves agree in it *(c)*, but the orders of St. Lewis being unfortunately miſcon-

(c) Macrizi, who has given a good deſcription of the expedition of St. Lewis, acknowledges that Manſoura would have been loſt, and the Mahometans totally defeated, had the French attacked in a body, and not in ſmall parties.

ſtructed,

ſtructed, all the troops were diſperſed; and the addreſs of *Bibars Elbondoukdari* prevented them from again forming a junction. Joinville ſays, that whilſt he was guarding the bridge, he ſaw many people of faſhion take to flight full gallop, without being ſtopped by the cries of their companions; but that Guion de Malvoiſin, with a troop of cavaliers of his own blood, and the Comte Peter of Britany gained immortal glory, and returned honourably from Manſoura, where they had ſignalized their courage.

On the morning of that memorable day, a pigeon was ſent off from Manſoura *(d)*, to carry to Grand Cairo the news of the death of *Facr Eddin*, and of the flight of the Egyptians. This letter threw

(d) This cuſtom, which has ſo long ſubſiſted in the Eaſt, is at preſent aboliſhed. It is not long ſince the merchants of Syria took this method of acquainting their correſpondents with the arrival of ſhips. When a veſſel arrived in the port of Alexandria, a pigeon was ſent off, which carried the intelligence in five or ſix hours to Aleppo. The caliphs of Bagdad had by this means eſtabliſhed a rapid correſpondence from Cairo to Bagdad.

the

the inhabitants into conſternation. The fugitives ſtill added to the alarm. The gates of the city were kept open all the night to receive them. Another pigeon brought them the next day the account of the ſucceſs of *Bibars*, and the Baharite ſlaves. Joy ſucceeded to deſpair. Mutual congratulations paſſed in the ſtreets, and there were public rejoicings.

Before ſun-riſe the enemy was in arms, and made an irruption into the camp, to carry off their warlike implements, which remained in the hands of the French. The attack was made on the ſide guarded by Joinville. Hearing a cry of "to arms," he got up, but he, as well as his ſoldiers, were ſo covered with wounds, that they were unable to wear either helmet or cuiraſs. They marched, however, againſt the enemy, who, having forced the advanced guards, were on the point of becoming maſters of their baliſtas. St. Lewis having ſent a reinforcement, under the Sire de Chatillon, they drove the Egyptians without the paliſadoes. At ſome diſtance from thence, eight Turks, well armed,

armed, intrenched behind a heap of ſtones, and well ſupported by a body of cavalry, kept firing on the camp, and did great execution. Joinville determined to attack them in the night, and deſtroy their intrenchment. John de Vaſſey, one of his prieſts, had leſs patience with them. He put on an iron hat, covered himſelf with a cuiraſs, and hiding a large ſcimitar under his arm, he marched towards them. The enemy paying little attention to a ſingle man, he inſenſibly approached them. As ſoon as he got near the Turks, he drew his ſabre, fell upon them, and laying furiouſly about him, put the whole eight to flight. This brave action rendered him famous throughout the army.

Touran Chah had now arrived in Egypt. *Chegeret Eddour*, whoſe genius, fertile in reſources, knew how to hold the reins of government in the moſt arduous times, committed every thing to his charge. The new Sultan repaired to Manſoura. He appeared at the head of his troops, and ſhewed them the coat of arms of the Comte d'Artois,

d'Artois, aſſuring them that it was the king's. "Brave Muſſulmen," added he, "redouble your efforts. The enemy have "loſt their chief. They will be no longer "able to withſtand our valour. Let us "make a general aſſault to-morrow. Let "us force them in their camp, and may it "be the laſt day of the French." The ſoldiers anſwered him with loud acclamations, and prepared to do their duty. St. Lewis was informed by his ſpies of the intended attack. He gave orders for each chieftain to arrange his battalions, at break of day, behind the palliſado of ſtakes planted in the earth, to prevent the enemy's cavalry from penetrating into the camp. His orders were carried into execution. At ſun-riſe the Sultan was ſeen, mounted on a ſuperb horſe, drawing up his troops in battle-array from the canal of *Achmoun* to the river. His cavalry were placed in front, and his infantry in the rear. He reinforced his lines in proportion to the enemy in his front. Towards noon, all his troops being ready for the attack, he diſplayed his colours, and ſound-

ed the charge. A dreadful noiſe was heard of trumpets and kettle-drums, and the Egyptian army ruſhed on to aſſault the French in every quarter.

The Count of Anjou who was at the head of the camp on the ſide of Manſoura, was the firſt attacked. The infantry preſented themſelves the firſt, and after launching their wild-fire, the cavalry poured in upon him, and cutting their way with their ſabres, penetrated the intrenchments. The prince fought on foot in the midſt of his troops, for almoſt all the cavalry had been diſmounted by the unfortunate battle of Manſoura. The number of the enemy, the advantage they had of engaging on horſeback, the dreadful fireworks they made uſe of, threw his battalions into diſorder. In ſpite of all his bravery, he was in danger of being ſlain or made priſoner. This intelligence being brought to the king, he flew to the aſſiſtance of his brother, with the cavaliers who remained about him. He puſhed ſo forward in the battle, that the bridle of his horſe was covered with wild-fire, and he

he himſelf narrowly eſcaped being burnt. The Egyptians could not ſuſtain the ſhock of this prince, and of his generous knights; they fell back in diſorder, and abandoned the ground they had gained.

Next to the Count of Anjou, were the the Cruſaders, commanded by Guy d'Ibelin, and Baudouin his brother. After them came Gautier de Chatillon, at the head of his ſquadron. Theſe two troops, filled with knights-errant, and with excellent cavalry, reſiſted every aſſault of the enemy, and remained unſhaken in their poſt, without retreating a ſingle ſtep.

William of Sonnac, Grand Maſter of the Temple, having loſt in the former engagements, the greateſt part of his knights, had fortified that part of the camp he guarded, with a double paliſado. The Egyptians ſet fire to it, and daſhing through the flames, made a furious attack upon him. The intrepid Templars, though covered with darts and arrows, formed an impenetrable rampart with their corps. Their Grand Maſter, who had left an eye at Manſoura, loſt the other in this engage-

ment, and died of his wound. Joinville aſſures us, that behind the ſtation he occupied, there was a large ſpace ſo covered with javelins, that one could not ſee the ground.

Guion Malvoiſin, who commanded a battalion near the Templars, defended himſelf with ſo much bravery, that the enemy could make no impreſſion. But this valiant chieftain was almoſt deſtroyed by the wild-fire thrown at him by the enemy.

Count William of Flanders had his quarter along the river. He received the Egyptians with vigour, and after glorioufly repulſing them, paſſed the paliſado, and making a furious charge, put to flight all ſuch as fell in his way, and killed a great number of them. Gautier de la Horgne ſignalized his courage in this action, by the moſt illuſtrious deeds of valour. The Count of Poitiers followed William of Flanders. He had nothing but infantry. The enemy broke through them, penetrated the camp, and ſeizing on the prince, carried him off a priſoner. At ſight of this, the

women

women and butchers ſet up a ſhout; and arming themſelves with axes, fell upon the victors, drove them out of the trenches, and retook the brother of the king.

Jocerant de Brancion, one of the moſt valiant knights in the French army, defended the part of the camp, which reached to the canal. All his party were foot ſoldiers. He alone was on horſeback. The Arabs frequently ſucceeded in forcing them; but this brave commander, ruſhing on them ſabre in hand, put them to rout, and rallied his forces. He muſt however, have fallen, with every man under his command, had not Henry de Brienne, who was in the duke of Burgundy's camp, made his men ſhoot their croſs-bows againſt the enemy acroſs the branch of the river, every time they renewed their attack. Jocerant de Brancion had been in ſix-and-thirty battles, and engagements, in which he had been victorious. He received in this action, which was not the leaſt glorious of his life, a great number of wounds, of which he died.

Night ſeparated the combatants. The king aſſembled his Barons the next day, to conſole them for their loſſes, and to excite their conſtancy. "Seigniors, ſaid he, let "us return thanks to heaven, and be of "good heart; we have paſſed one river, "driven the enemy from their camp, and "withſtood, without cavalry, the whole "power of the Sultan of Egypt." *Touran Chab* in fact, diſcouraged by ſo obſtinate a reſiſtance, deſpaired of forcing the French in their camp, and he determined to ſtarve them out. Their army enjoyed all the proviſions ſtored up at Damietta. The little fleet they had on the river ſecured their convoys, and procured them abundance. The king of Egypt imagined that if he could ſucceed in cutting off all communication between the camp and Damietta, he ſhould get poſſeſſion of thoſe by famine whom he could not conquer. From that moment he put every manœuvre in practice, to carry his project into execution. Having collected a great number of boats, he made them be taken to pieces,

and

and conveyed on camels near to the canal of *Meballé (e)*. They were concealed in a place proper for an ambuſcade.

The French fleet was coming up the river in perfect ſecurity, and conveying the cuſtomary ſupply of proviſions for the camp. When it came near the iſle where the Sultan's galleys were concealed, the Egyptians came ſuddenly upon them, and ſurpriſed their enemies. They attacked them furiouſly, ſurrounded them, ſlew about a thouſand ſoldiers, and took fifty large boats laden with proviſions. From that day the Egyptians

(e) Abulfeda informs us that there are ſeveral towns and villages in Egypt which have the name of *Mehalli*. That in queſtion is three leagues lower than Manſoura. Here is a ſmall canal, the opening of which is concealed by an iſland. This place appears well calculated for an ambuſcade. In the edition of Joinville, printed at the Louvre, there is a note at the bottom of the page where Macrizi ſpeaks of *Meballé*, and it is thought to point out *Meballé Kebiré*, the capital of one of the provinces of the Delta. This is a miſtake. That town is ſituated ſix leagues above Manſoura. To enable a fleet ſtationed in that place to prevent the French veſſels from reaching their camp, their proviſions muſt have come from *Upper Egypt*.

became maſters of the river, and the communication between the camp and Damietta was interrupted. Want ſoon began to make its appearance, and diſeaſe, its terrible companion, followed immediately upon it. The wounded periſhed for want of nouriſhment. The dead bodies, which filled the river and the canal, infected the air. A dreadful epidemic diſorder ſpread throughout the army. Few of thoſe who were attacked with it eſcaped death. Their fleſh dried up; their livid ſkins were covered with black ſpots; their gums ſwelled ſo prodigiouſly, that they could no longer take any food; theſe fungous excreſcences were obliged to be cut off. The unfortunate perſons who underwent this operation, made the moſt lamentable cries. Such was the appearance of an army ſo flouriſhing at its firſt entrance into Egypt. Arabian authors agree with Joinville in giving us a frightful picture of the deplorable condition of the French, ſurrounded by enemies, and a prey to all the horrors of famine and diſeaſe.

On the 7th of March 1250, the veſſels which remained at Damietta made a freſh attempt to ſupply the army with proviſions. They were all taken, except one, belonging to the Count of Flanders, which defended itſelf ſo bravely, that the Egyptians were repulſed, and the veſſel arrived ſafe at the camp. The defeat of the two fleets was confirmed, as well as the impoſſibility of receiving ſuccours from Damietta, on account of the enemy, who covered the river with their galleys. This intelligence threw the French into conſternation, and added to the evils with which they were already overwhelmed. Saint Lewis, conſulting his Barons, reſolved to paſs his army to the ſame ſide with the Duke of Burgundy, by the wooden bridge thrown over between the two camps. To hinder the enemy from profiting by this movement, a wall was built at ſome diſtance from the end of the bridge, and the troops filed along the ſide of it. The baggage was ſent off firſt; next followed the King and his corps. Gautier de Chatillon commanded the rear-guard. The whole Egyptian

tian army fell upon him. The firmneſs with which he received them, checked their impetuoſity. Freſh enemies continued to ſucceed each other, and a part of the army preſſed between the wall and the canal, covered with wild-fire, and with darts, was on the point of deſtruction. It was ſaved by the diſtinguiſhed valour of the Count of Anjou, who drove off the Egyptians. Geoffroy de Muſſemburg, who fought by his ſide, ſignalized himſelf by the moſt heroic actions, and merited the palm of that day's battle.

The French, encamped behind the canal of *Achmoun*, were now ſecure againſt the ſword of the enemy, but not againſt famine and contagion. St. Lewis himſelf paid a tribute to theſe misfortunes, with the reſt of his ſoldiers. The camp became every day a vaſt churchyard, where death marked out his victims. In theſe dreadful circumſtances, nothing but a truce could ſave the remains of his army. He propoſed one to the Sultan. Miniſters were named reſpectively on each ſide. The king

of

of France offered to reſtore Damietta *(f)*, on condition that the places taken from them in Syria ſhould be given back to the

(f) In the year 1218, the cruſaders attacked Damietta, and took it after a ſiege of ſixteen months. Sultan *Melek el Kamel* withdrew to the diſtance of two days journey from the town, and encamped at the angle formed by the branch of Achmoun with the Nile, at the ſpot where Manſoura ſtands. The cruſado princes followed him, and pitched their camp on the oppoſite bank, in front of the Egyptians. The communication between the army and Damietta being cut off, the Europeans offered to reſtore that town, on condition that Jeruſalem, Aſcalon, and Tiberias ſhould be ceded to them. This propoſition was rejected. The Sultan made a cut from the Nile, then at its greateſt height, and overflowed the enemy's camp. They were up to their middle in water, and had they not made their retreat by a cauſeway, the whole army muſt have been drowned. *Melek el Kamel* threw bridges over the canal of *Achmoun*, and paſſed troops over, who took poſſeſſion of the dyke. The cruſaders burnt their tents, and warlike implements, and attempted to take the route of Damietta, but it was impoſſible for them to advance. They offered to ſurrender that town; and peace was concluded on that condition in the year 1221. *Macrizi, hiſtory of the Arab Dynaſties.*

Saint Lewis was encamped on the ſame ſpot with the cruſaders; he offered the ſame terms, but underwent a more cruel fate than they did.

knights

knights of Jeruſalem. The two parties not agreeing, the conferences were broken off. One only reſource now remained for the French, which was to get back to Damietta. The night of Tueſday the 5th of April was made choice of for the flight. Saint Lewis recommended ſtrongly to his brothers and the engineers to cut the cables which held the bridge ſuſpended over the canal of *Achmoun*. When the earth was covered with darkneſs, the troops began their march towards Damietta. Such as were prevented by illneſs from going on foot, or bearing the motion of a horſe, got into boats, and fell down the river. Joinville was of the number. Saint Lewis, though weakened by the dyſentery, would neither abandon his troops, nor be amongſt the firſt who took to flight. He poſted himſelf, on the contrary, in the rear-guard, commanded by Gautier de Chatillon. Of all his officers, Geoffrey de Segines was the only one who ſtayed faithfully by him, and who never abandoned him in this poſt of danger.

The

The Egyptians perceiving at break of day that the army had decamped, flew in purſuit of them. Notwithſtanding the preciſe orders of St. Lewis, the bridge was not cut down. They paſſed it without difficulty, and the cavalry going full ſpeed, came up with the French at *Fareſcour*. The firſt attack fell upon the rear. Geoffroy de Segines defended his king with an admirable intrepidity. He repulſed with violent blows of club and ſword, all ſuch as approached him. He conducted the king into a houſe in the village, where fatigue and diſeaſe made him faint away in the arms of a woman of Paris. On coming to himſelf, he had the conſolation to hear that about five hundred knights, collected about his perſon, were valiantly defending him againſt the whole forces of the Sultan. They were deſperately engaged at the entrance of the village. The French, animated by the deſire of ſaving *(g)* a prince

(g) Joinville and the Arabian authors agree, that the king, by taking flight, might have ſaved himſelf at Damietta. It certainly would have been the moſt prudent

prince they adored, performed prodigies of valour, and were diſputing the victory with the enemy. In the midſt of the ſhock of battle, a traitor, of the name of Marcel, cried out with a loud voice: "My "lords knights, ſurrender, the king com- "mands you. Let not your obſtinacy "occaſion him to periſh." On theſe words they laid down their arms. The king, his brother, and all the army were made priſoners. Whilſt theſe tranſactions were going on, Gautier de Chatillon alone defended a narrow ſtreet againſt whole torrents of the enemy. He was armed from head to foot, and mounted on a good horſe. He graſped a tremendous ſword, and when the Egyptians appeared, he flew to meet them, crying: *Chatillon, Chevalier, where are my brave fellows?* When he had overthrown thoſe in front, he turned his bridle, and fell upon the others, who were coming to attack him in the rear. He flew a

prudent ſtep, but that generous prince would never conſent to leave ſo many brave men expoſed to the chains of the enemy; and his courage made him prefer the poſt of danger.

great

great number of the enemy; but covered with arrows, ſpent with fatigue, and loſs of blood, he fell at length, and they cut off his head.

The king and all the priſoners were conducted to Manſoura. Thoſe who were on board the veſſels had no better fortune. They fell into the hands of the enemy, who drowned a part of them in the river. Joinville only eſcaped death by a ſort of miracle. He was ſo weak that he could hardly ſtand. The Egyptians were going to cut off his head, but a generous Arab took pity on him, and taking him in his arms, cried out with all his might: *He is the couſin of the king. He is the couſin of the king.* Theſe words ſaved his life, and he was conducted with ſeveral noblemen to Manſoura. Raoul de Wanon, who was in the ſame boat, having been hamſtrung in the former engagements, could not ſtand upon his legs. An old Arab took compaſſion on him, and lifting him on his neck, carried him to the neceſſary every time he had occaſion to go thither.

Touran

Touran Chah ſent fifty dreſſes to the king and to the noblemen who were priſoners. They put them on, but St. Lewis refuſed to wear them, ſaying haughtily, that he was ſovereign of a country as great as Egypt, and that it was unworthy of him to wear the clothes of another ſovereign. The Sultan having prepared a great entertainment, invited him to it; but this prince was equally inflexible on that occaſion, and did not conceal his ſuſpicion, that he diſcovered through the pretended politeneſs of the Sultan, the deſire he had of making a ſhew of him to his army.

Ten thouſand Frenchmen were in chains. So great a number embarraſſed *Touran Chah*. This cruel prince ordered three or four hundred of them out of priſon every night, and *Seif Eddin*, as cruel a miniſter of his vengeance, cut off the heads of all thoſe who refuſed to embrace Mahometiſm.

Peter of Britany was nominated to treat for the deliverance of St. Lewis and ſome other priſoners. The Egyptians demanded Damietta, and all the places in Syria. This latter article being rejected, the Maho-

Mahometans broke off the conferences, and tried to obtain by fear what was refuſed them. They ſent a number of armed men into the houſe where St. Lewis and his brothers were kept, who, flouriſhing their ſabres, threatened to cut off their heads. Theſe menaces producing no effect on a prince whoſe exalted mind was ſuperior to adverſity, and whom nothing was capable of driving to injuſtice, the negociations were renewed. The Egyptians demanded 100,000 beſants of gold *(b)*, and the reſtitution of Damietta, for the deliverance of the king and all the priſoners. St. Lewis ſaid, that he conſented, provided the queen approved of it. The Mahometans expreſſing their ſurpriſe at this clauſe of the treaty, he added; "*The "queen is my miſtreſs, and I cannot take "this ſtep without her conſent.*" *Touran Chah*, aſtoniſhed that the king ſhould without heſitation have granted ſo conſiderable a ſum, was deſirous of appearing generous, and declared, that he gave up 100,000 livres of the ranſom. The

(b) 500,000 Pariſian livres.

two parties being agreed, and oaths mutually exchanged, the Sultan gave orders for the embarkation of the princes, and the priſoners in four large veſſels for Damietta.

Whilſt the articles were preparing, Joinville and ſeveral noblemen, who were confined in a diſtant tent, ſaw a troop of young men enter, armed with ſcimitars, and an old man at their head; after the bloody executions that took place every night, they naturally imagined they were the miniſters of death, and thought all was over. The old man aſked them in a ſerious tone of voice, if they believed in one God, who had died, and ariſen for them from the dead. "We believe in him," they replied: "Well then," ſaid the old man, "do not be diſcouraged, for your "ſufferings for him do not equal his ſuf-"ferings for you. If he had the power "himſelf of riſing from the dead, be con-"fident that he will deliver you in his "own good time." The old man ſaying theſe words, withdrew. Theſe words conveyed aſtoniſhment into their minds, and inſpired all their hearts with courage.

Shortly

Shortly after they had the news of the concluſion of the treaty, which reſtored them to their liberty.

Touran Chah had brought with him from Diarbekir, about fifty courtiers, who poſſeſſed all his confidence. On mounting the throne of Egypt, he had ſignalized the commencement of his reign by diſplacing his father's old ſervants, and by exalting his own favourites. The former, who had riſen to the great offices of the ſtate by real ſervices, were ſtripped in a moment, and the moſt important employments were filled by upſtarts. This flagrant injuſtice exaſperated the minds of the great men, and of the army. The young Sultan did not confine his bad-policy to this inſtance. It was to the Baharite ſlaves he was indebted for the victory at Manſoura, and the defeat of the French. Far from rewarding them, and of attaching to himſelf, by his bounty, a corps formed by *Nejm Eddin*, and formidable from its reputation and its valour, he deſpoiled them of their employments, and gave them to underſtand, by his language, that it was his intention to aboliſh

them. Indignation was the fruit of this imprudent conduct. Hatred took deep root in their minds, and the thirſt of vengeance waited only for the moment of gratification. *Touran Chah* ſoon gave them the opportunity. During the negociations he retired to *Fareſcour*, the theatre of his victory. He had built a wooden tower on the bank of the river, and prepared magnificent tents to encamp in, until the reſtitution of Damietta. Intoxicated with ſucceſs, and the adulations of his flatterers, he gave himſelf up to his taſte for debauchery, and abandoned himſelf to every ſpecies of voluptuouſneſs. Gold runs, like water, through the hands of a debauched monarch. His expences became exceſſive; to ſupply his pleaſures he had the preſumption to call *Chegeret Eddour* to account for the treaſures of his father, and threatened her with vengeance if ſhe delayed the matter. This ambitious woman ſaw that ſhe was undone if ſhe did not fruſtrate the deſign of the tyrant. She addreſſed herſelf to the chiefs of the Baharite ſlaves, repreſented to them the ſervices ſhe had rendered the

monarchy

monarchy in times of the greateſt danger, the favour ſhe had always ſhewn them, and the ingratitude of *Touran Chah*. She concluded by imploring their protection againſt a king, who had vowed an eternal hatred againſt the friends of *Nejm Eddin*. Nothing more was neceſſary to irritate the Baharites, already too much diſpoſed to vengeance. They promiſed her ſatisfaction, and vowed the death of the Sultan. The very ſame day, *Bibars Elbondouk Dari*, having gained the attendants on his perſon, entered the tent, where he was at table, and made a blow with a ſabre at him, which would have taken off his head, had he not parried it with his hand. The prince's fingers were cut off. He fled precipitately to a tower on the banks of the Nile, and ſhut the gate. The aſſaſſins purſued him, and the French whom the Egyptians were conducting to Damietta, being obliged to ſtop at that place, were witneſſes to a ſcene of horror. The murderers, ſeeing that they could not enter the tower, ſet fire to it. *Touran Chah* in vain cried out, that he abdicated the em-

pire, and that he only wiſhed to return to Diarbekir; they ſhut their ears againſt his cries and lamentations. The flames having ſurrounded him, he threw himſelf from the top of the tower. A nail held him by his cloak, and he remained ſuſpended. The barbarians ruſhed upon him, cut him in pieces with their ſabres, and threw him into the water near Joinville's boat. All the Egyptian army beheld this horrid ſpectacle without taking any ſtep to ſave their king, to ſuch a degree had his imprudent conduct exaſperated their minds. Thus miſerably periſhed the laſt ſovereign of the family of the Aioubites, eſtabliſhed in Egypt by *Salah Eddin*.

After the maſſacre of *Touran Chah*, the Sultana *Chegeret Eddour* was proclaimed Queen of Egypt. She was the firſt female ſlave who had reigned in that country during the government of the Arabs. This Princeſs was of Turkiſh, others ſay of Armenian extraction. *Nejm Eddin*, who had purchaſed her, was ſo paſſionately fond of her, that he never quitted her, and took her with him when he went to war. Money

was

was coined in her name, and the Emir *Azed Eddin Aibeb*, the Turcoman, was named generaliſſimo of the troops *(i)*.

The aſſaſſins entered the veſſel the French priſoners were on board of, and he

(i) Chegeret Eddour, after reigning three months, married him, and reſigned the ſovereign power in his favour. He was the firſt ſovereign of the dynaſty the Baharites. After a ſeven years reign, the Sultana ſeeing that he was tired of only poſſeſſing the title of king, whilſt ſhe enjoyed the power, and that he thought of other amours, had him aſſaſſinated, though he had repudiated a wife he loved, to pleaſe her. *Nour Eddin*, ſon of that unhappy marriage, conceived a violent hatred againſt *Chegeret Eddour*. By dint of money he bribed her women, and got them to deſtroy her. Her body, thrown naked into a ditch, lay there three days without burial, and was at length placed in the tomb ſhe had prepared for herſelf. *Nour Eddin*, the ſecond Baharite Sultan, was aſſaſſinated at the end of two years. *Bibars* ſucceeded him, and reigned glorioufly for ſeventeen years. *Echref Hagi*, the laſt of the Baharite ſlaves, who mounted the throne of Egypt, voluntarily abdicated royalty. *Barkouk*, who reigned after him, began the dynaſty of the *Mamalukes*, or Circaſſian ſlaves, who governed Egypt for 121 years, under 22 kings. The laſt was *Tomam Bey*, hanged by Sultan Selim at one of the gates of Cairo.

who had put an end to *Touran Chah*, and whoſe hand was ſtill reeking with his blood, ſaid to St. Lewis, "What will "you give me, for having diſpatched your "enemy?" The king made no anſwer. Several of theſe villains, ſabre in hand, leaped into the galley where Joinville was, with a great many noblemen, and flouriſhing their ſcimitars, talked of cutting off their heads. Theſe knights, terrified with the ſpectacle they had juſt beheld, expected nothing but death; and, as pious as they were brave, falling down on their knees before a brother of the Trinity, inſtantly confeſſed themſelves. The crowd being very great, and the prieſt not able to hear them at once, Guy d'Ybelin, conſtable of Cyprus, confeſſed himſelf to Joinville, who ſaid to him with an admirable naïveté; *I abſolve you with all the power that God has given me.* It was thus that Bayard, the knight without fear and without reproach, when mortally wounded, confeſſed himſelf to his ſquire, at the foot of an oak-tree. Theſe noblemen, however, eſcaped with being

being thrown promiſcuouſly into the hold, where ſuffering under illneſs, they paſſed a cruel night in expectation of a ſtill more dreadful fate; for they were fully perſuaded that they ſhould never get out of this horrible dungeon, except to be led to execution.

Abou Ali being appointed to treat of an accommodation with the king of France, after many debates, the ancient conventions were confirmed. It was ſtipulated that St. Lewis ſhould pay down before he quitted the Nile, 200,000 livres for his ranſom, and that of his ſubjects; that he ſhould evacuate Damietta, and that the remainder of the ſum ſhould be paid in the town of Acra. After theſe oaths had been mutually taken, the French noblemen were releaſed from their dreadful captivity, and hope once more ſtepped in to ſoothe their misfortunes.

The diſgrace of the king, however, and of his whole army, having reached the ears of the queen, ſhe was overwhelmed with grief. She was then far advanced in her pregnancy, and this news was announced

nounced to her three days before her delivery. Her terrified imagination repreſented the enemy as already at the gates of Damietta. She thought ſhe ſaw them enter the town, and ſpread fire and blood in every quarter. Her agitations became ſo violent, that ſhe was thought to be at the point of death. An aged knight, of near fourſcore years old, ſerved as her uſher, and never quitted her night and day. This unhappy princeſs ſtarted up in the midſt of her ſlumber, imagining the barbarians were entering her apartment. The old chevalier, who held her hand when ſhe was aſleep, ſqueezed it, and ſaid to her, "Madam, fear nothing, you are in ſafety." A moment after ſhe had cloſed her eyes, ſhe again awakened, making the moſt frightful cries. The grave uſher again comforted her. To relieve herſelf at length from theſe cruel alarms, the queen made all her attendants leave the apartment, except her guardian; then throwing herſelf on her knees, ſhe ſaid to him, "Cheva-
"lier, promiſe me to grant the favour I
"am

" am about to aſk you:" He promiſed, and ſhe continued; " I conjure you by " the ſacred promiſe you have made me, " if the Saracens take this town, to cut off " my head, before they can lay hold of " me." " Madam, replied the Chevalier, " be aſſured that I will cheerfully obey " you. I had already thought of it, " and was determined to take your life, " rather than let you fall into their " hands." This anſwer calmed the queen.

The day after this affecting ſcene, ſhe lay-in of a ſon, who was called *John Triſtan*, from the melancholy circumſtances in which he was born. News was brought her the ſame day, that the Genoeſe, and the Piſans, who were in the pay of France, with the people of the country, were diſpoſed to take to flight, and abandon Damietta. This princeſs ſent for their leaders to her bedſide, and ſaid to them with tears in her eyes, " Seigniors, for the love of God, do not " leave this town. The loſs of it would " occaſion that of the king and the whole " army. Take pity on this poor infant

" you

"you ſee lying by my ſide." The chiefs repreſenting to her that they were dying with hunger, ſhe immediately gave orders to purchaſe all the proviſions in the town, and diſmiſſed them with aſſurances, that from that day they ſhould be fed at the king's expence. Thus did this courageous princeſs ſave Damietta, the laſt remaining reſource of the French.

The veſſels in which were St. Lewis and the other priſoners being arrived near the bridge of Damietta, the King ſent for the Queen and the Princeſſes on board. All the French quitted the town at the appointed time, and embarked in different veſſels. The Egyptians entered it. Theſe barbarians getting drunk, inhumanly murdered the ſick, whom they had engaged by treaty to take care of until they were ſent for from Acra. Theſe firſt breaches of faith did not indicate a very honourable diſpoſition on their part. A violent diſpute had, in fact, ariſen amongſt them. Some were for killing the king, and all the priſoners. Others inſiſted on letting them go, according to the convention,

tion, adding, that by violating their oaths, the Egyptians would be ſtigmatized as the moſt infamous people in the univerſe. The conteſt grew warm, and a whole day paſſed in that ſtate of indeciſion. Whilſt theſe debates laſted, they made the boats go up the river with the unhappy captives a league above Damietta, and they did not conceal from them the intention of cutting off their heads. At length, *Aibeb*, the *Turcoman*, who expected to ſhare with the Baharite ſlaves *(k)* the two hundred thouſand livres, which were to be paid at Acra, drew his ſabre, and vowed that he would never ſuffer them thus to violate the faith of treaties. This declaration terminated the diſpute, and they agreed to ſet the French at liberty.

Whilſt the Egyptians were meditating ſo abominable an outrage, St. Lewis was

(k) From the confeſſion of the Arabian hiſtorians themſelves, it is certain that the fear alone of loſing the ſum to be paid at Acra, proved the ſafety of the king, and all the French; and that the barbarians, who had juſt dipped their hands in the blood of *Touran Chah*, would not have ſpared one of their enemies, had they not found that ſuch a meaſure would be inconſiſtent with their intereſt.

in

in great anger with a nobleman for ſaying that they had cheated the Egyptians of ten thouſand livres, in paying them the promiſed ſum, and ordered them to be reſtored, although they had already broken through a part of their engagement.

The conditions agreed on being reciprocally fulfilled, St. Lewis, his brothers and his wife, embarked for Acra in the year 1250, eleven months and twelve days after the capture of Damietta.

The following is the portrait given of St. Lewis, by *Gemal Eddin*, an Arabian hiſtorian. "This prince had a handſome "face. He had underſtanding, courage, "and religion. His good qualities pro- "cured him the veneration of the Chriſti- "ans, who placed in him an unbounded "confidence: He might have eſcaped out "of the hands of the Egyptians, by taking "flight either in a boat, or on horſeback; "but this generous king never would aban- "don his troops."

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo, 2d of February, 1779.

I HAVE laid before you, Sir, the deſcription of Lower Egypt, geographical and hiſtorical details on the principal towns, and the parallel of the ancient and modern manners of its inhabitants; it remains for me to give you an account of the commerce of this country, its ſingular government, the revolutions which have happened before my eyes, and the wonders of Upper Egypt. Theſe objects will form a *future volume*. You exhort me to publiſh it as ſoon as poſſible, and engage for its ſucceſs; but friendſhip is indulgent, and the public ſevere. Suffer me to wait its deciſion on the firſt part of theſe letters, before I venture to expoſe the ſequel to its cenſure. Should this work not meet with a favourable reception, I have written

ten too much, and if it be honoured with the good opinion of the public, I shall continue it with redoubled ardour.

I have the honour to be, with respect,

SIR,

Your most humble and
most obedient servant,
SAVARY.

LET-

MEDITERRANEAN

Sebennitic Mouth

Cape Bourlos

Bourlos

Landing of St. Louis

Camp of the Egyptians

LAKE BOURLOS

Balbitine Mouth or that of Rosetta

Castles

Canopic Mouth

Rosetta Raschid

Berimbal

Michalet Island

Madie

Aboukir Canopus

Djedie

Deirout

Faoue

Metelis

ALEXANDRIA

Brouderie

Casr Selim

Canal of Alexandria

Mehalle Malek

Damanhour

Taposiris parva

Balmanie

Safi

Taouilé

Ennatif

Mehalle el Kebire

Semennoud Sebennitus

Bousir Bufiris

Gerah

Mit abulhari

Salanié

Mehalle elleben

Schabour

Mit demsis

Ste Gemiane

Casr iousef

Butis in ruins

Canal of Thebaniè

Saoualim

Demaie

Mehalle

Diast

Baramoun

Camp of the

Passage

Camp of the Eg

Mansoure

Bhabeit

Zephté

Mit rhamr

Tanta

Saouafe

Amrous

Saradj

Koum cherik

Tafane

Nadir

Mit bera

Menhouf

Canal of Menhouf

Atrib Atribis

Monastery of St. Macaire

Terrané

Tant

Dagoue

Abou Chaouach

Faraounié

Quardan

Zoufeti

Ancient Pelus

Charaanié

el arksas

Cercasorum

Canal of Adrian

Kolioub

Matarea

Heliopolis

Canal

Boulac

GRAND CAIRO

Enbabé

Gizé

Babylon

Bousir

Great Pyramids

Lake

Pyramids of Saccara

Memphis

Mar

Lake where the Natroun is found

Monasteries of the Desert inhabited by the Copts

Country of Pierre d'Aigle

The bed of the Nile shut up by a King of Egypt, the traces of which are still found in the Desert, the Arabs who give the name of Sea to Great Rivers call it Bahr bela ma, Sea without water.

DESART

Scite

Lake Marcotis

30

Phatmetic Mouth or that of Damietta
Cape Bouiau
Nouvelle Mouth
SEA
St. Louis
Camp of the Egyptians
Fort
Fort
Giza
Elbé ancient Damietta
Mendesian Mouth or Dibé
Senanié
Modern Damietta
LAKE
Farescourt
Tanitic Mouth or ouin Farregé
OF
Scherimsah
Mehallé
MENZALÉ
Camp of the French
Achmoun tanis
Tanis in ruins
Passage du Gué
Touna
Pelusiac Mouth or Elfaxama
Pelusa or Thinchinsir
DESART
Pelusiac branch, at present choaked up
of the Prince of the Faithful dug by Amrou to the Red Sea

Latitude of the principal Places in lower Egypt.			
Alexandria	31d. 12m	batn elbakara	30d. 13m
Rosetta	31 . 24	Zephta	30 . 42
Ouardan	30 . 21	Damietta	31 . 26
Grand Cairo	30 . 2	Cape bourlos	31 . 41

Scale of French Leagues.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LETTER XXVII.

ROUTE FROM OLD CAIRO TO TAMIEH, IN THE PROVINCE OF FAIOUM.

Departure from Foſtat, in the month of November. Deſcription of the Moſque called Athar Ennabi. *Reflections on the pilgrimage made to this place. State of the plain of Egypt at this ſeaſon of the year. Reflections on the pyramids compared with the tomb of Mauſoleus, and the Morrai in Otaheité. Account of the plain of the Mummies, of the flint-ſtones of Egypt, and of* Dachhour, *anciently* Achantus. *Arrival at Tamieh in Faioum.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

YOU aſſure me, Sir, that the public have given a favourable reception to the letters I addreſſed you, and you deſire me to furniſh you with the remainder. You are deſirous, after having given you the deſcription of the Lower, that I ſhould ſerve

you as a guide in the Upper Egypt. You wiſh to ſurvey with me that boaſted country, whoſe antiquities Alexander, Julius Cæſar, Adrian, Severus, and ſo many other monarchs, went expreſsly to admire. I give way to your deſire, and ſhall endeavour to prove myſelf worthy of your confidence. But recollect, that inſtead of theſe Egyptians, celebrated for their wiſdom, and their knowledge, you will now only behold a nation plunged in the profoundeſt ignorance. Remember that in place of famous edifices you will often meet with ruins, or decayed hamlets. The contraſt is ſo ſtriking, that if all the great works of ancient Egypt had periſhed, like thoſe of many other nations, her glory would have been buried with them. Yes, Sir, if this country, peopled at this day by Turks and Arabs, were totally deſpoiled of her wonders, ſhe would be regarded as the country of Fairies, embelliſhed by the brilliant pencil of the Greeks. But the pride of doubt is humbled before the unſhaken maſs of pyramids; and the curious obſerver, who, not content with meaſuring

their

their height, attends to the ſecret of the paſſages, and conſiders the means which art has put in practice, to prevent them from being entered, cannot help admiring this effort of human genius, nor refuſe his tribute of admiration. We are now about to contemplate labours not leſs ſurpriſing; and as the conſtruction of many of them united with the grandeur of the enterprize the happineſs of the people, they have an additional claim on your curioſity.

We are now in the month of November, the moſt favourable moment for aſcending into the *Said (a)*. The heat is moderate, and the canals being now full, afford us the opportunity of navigating into the interior parts of the country. Let us embark then on this river, which, in its numerous windings, fertilizes, for two hundred leagues, this valley, where princes and men of learning, for near three thouſand years, have gone to admire the ruins

(a) The Arabs call all Upper Egypt by the name of the Said, from Old Cairo to Aſſouan, or Sienna.

of a people, who ſtrove to impreſs upon their works the ſtamp of immortality.

We quit the port of Old Cairo. The north wind puſhes us againſt the rapidity of the current. The waters have ſubſided from the foot of the hills. The low grounds are ſtill overflowed. But the majeſtic Nile re-enters gradually his bed. Verdure and the harveſts tread cloſe upon his footſteps, and occupy the place he has abandoned. Here they are buſy in ſowing cucumbers, and water-melons. There the labourer prepares the ſoil with the plough, gently furrowing the ſurface with the plough-ſhare. The oxen draw it along without difficulty, conducted by a ſingle man. Near the mountains, where the ground is higher, the corn and the dourra already begin to ſhew themſelves.

We paſs before *Geziret-Dahab*, the golden Iſland, which preſents us with a meadow, covered with flocks, and a ſmall village. On the left we leave the great moſque of *Atar Ennabi*, ſituated on the banks of the river. This temple, much frequented by the inhabitants of Cairo, is the

the object of a famous pilgrimage. It poſſeſſes a ſtone, whereon the muſſulmen imagine they perceive the impreſſion of one of the feet of Mahomet. Hence they have named it *Atar Ennabi*, the veſtiges of the prophet. The Scheik, who officiates at the place, takes great care to confirm this pious belief, and to publiſh the miracles which are there produced. As all his riches conſiſt in this pretended relick, he preſerves it with a ſcrupulous attention. It is covered with a rich veil, which he lifts up to gratify devotees, from whom he expects a trifling preſent. The following account of it I had from a lady of Cairo, who is married to a French merchant, ſettled forty years in the country *(b)*.

" I had often heard talk of *Atar En-*
" *nabi*, and of the miracles they publiſhed
" reſpecting it. I was curious to ſee this
" renowned ſtone. Our dreſs, exactly
" ſimilar to that of the Turkiſh wo-
" men, allowing me to mix with them,

(b) The wife of Mr. Meynard, a merchant, whoſe probity and information have procured him the eſteem of the French, the Copti, the Turks and the Arabs.

"without fear of diſcovery, I repaired to the "moſque at an hour when I expected to "find few people there. I begged the "cheik to ſhew me the relick. Two "Turkiſh ladies of rank entering at the "ſame time, expreſſed the ſame deſire. "He uncovered it. After burning ſome "precious eſſences, and repeating ſome "paſſages of the Coran, he ſaid to "us: Behold that ſacred impreſſion; ad-"mire the traces of the greateſt of pro-"phets! ah! that is really the foot of "Mahomet! The two women repeated with "enthuſiaſm, Yes, that is truly the foot of "Mahomet, the greateſt of prophets! As "for me, added the French lady, I do "aſſure you, that in ſpite of the moſt "ſcrupulous attention, I perceived no-"thing but a ſmooth ſtone, tinctured with "perfumes, where I could diſcover neither "the traces of a foot, nor any thing like it."

Strange effect of the prejudice of man! which enchains his reaſon, and makes him ſee, feel, and touch whatever his imagination may ſuggeſt to his prepoſſeſſed underſtanding. It was thus, that Mr. Tournefort,

ſort, aſſiſting in one of the iſles of the Archipelago, at the opening of a tomb where the people were convinced they ſhould find a vampire, perceived nothing but a livid corpſe, half eaten by worms, whilſt the Greeks inſiſted that they beheld an entire body, of a vermilion colour, and which, according to them, diffuſed no diſagreeable odour.

Mr. Norden, in his charming views of Egypt, has very well deſcribed the Moſque of *Atar Ennabi* and its environs; but he is deceived in placing Memphis on the ſpot occupied by Giſa. He cannot however be reproached with this, for he himſelf confeſſes his doubts of that being the true ſituation of this ancient city. I think I have already aſcertained this point beyond a doubt in the preceding letters, nor ſhould I have corrected the error into which ſeveral travellers have fallen in this reſpect, had I not apprehended they might miſlead other writers. Deceived by this, the learned Jablonſki *(c)* has in vain employed all the ſagacity

(c) Jablonſki, deceived by the falſe poſition ſeveral travellers have given to Memphis, by placing it on the

ſagacity of his underſtanding, in the reſearch after a truth he never could diſcover, as he eſtabliſhed it on a falſe principle.

At a ſmall diſtance from *Atar Ennabi*, we diſcover, through tufts of date-trees a ſmall village, where the Turks have a moſque, and the Copti a convent called *Der Ettin*, the monaſtery of figs, doubtleſs becauſe that fruit grows there in abundance. There are two ſorts of them. The firſt ſprings even out of the branches of the ſycamore. It is dry and little eſteemed. The other ſort, the ſame we cultivate in France, is juicy, ſugary, and of an exquiſite flavour.

On the eaſtern bank villages appear ſituated on artificial eminences. The ſummit is occupied by huts, to which men and animals retire during the inundation. Already does the lucern, which is ſown in proportion as the Nile returns into the canals, form a zone of verdure round theſe little iſlands. Tribes of wandering Arabs

ſpot where Giſa ſtands, has written that the temple of Serapis was built in the iſle of Raouda, where the Mekias now is. This is an error. *Tome ſecond.*

have

have prepared their tents on the deſcent of the ſandy hillocks, to profit by the bounties of the river. They purchaſe for ſome months the right of ſending their flocks to feed in the meadows, which they quit when the paſturage is exhauſted. Theſe untameable herds, martyrs to that liberty they paſſionately love, prefer the horror of their deſerts to all the advantages of ſociety. The ſhadow of ſlavery puts them to flight. Conſtantly upon their guard againſt tyranny, on the ſlighteſt cauſe of diſcontent they receive, their ſtrike their tents, load their camels with them, ravage the flat country, and, laden with ſpoils, penetrate into their burning ſands, where no one can follow them, and which they alone have the courage to inhabit. Theſe Bedouins, *(d)*, the ſcourge of Egypt, which they regard as their patrimony, are the irreconcileable enemies of the Turks, who fear and abhor them *(e)*.

We

(d) This word comes from *Bedaoui*, which ſignifies inhabitant of the deſert.

(e) The hatred ſubſiſting between the two nations has given riſe to this familiar expreſſion, *Traiter quelqu'un*

We have paſſed the village of *Bouſir*, and are oppoſite to the great pyramids, which riſe to the height of ſix hundred feet perpendicular. Whilſt our boat is following the windings of the river, their ſummits deſcribe portions of circles in the horizon. With what majeſty theſe mountains, formed by the hand of man, elevate themſelves in the air! Their antiquity ſtill renders them more awful. How often has the ſun enlightened them at his riſing, burnt them at his zenith, and coloured them at his ſetting! For how many ages have they followed the earth in her great orbit which forms the year! Man then has ſucceeded in creating durable monuments! and theſe monuments are tombs! Some authors imagining that the havock occaſioned by the violent forcing of the great pyramid was the effect of time, have calculated how many ages it might ſtill remain; but as they ſet out on a falſe principle, they are infinitely diſtant from the truth. It ſeems to me impoſſible to fix the epocha when

qu'un de Turc à More; that is to ſay, with the rigour uſed by the Turks towards the Arabs.

they

they ſhall ceaſe to be. Thouſands of years hence, unleſs ſome great revolution happens, the travellers of enlightened nations ſhall go to admire theſe ſtupendous monuments, and ſay, ſcarcely had Europe a few ſavages diſperſed in her foreſts, when a learned nation erected theſe ſuperb mauſolea, towards the four cardinal points of heaven, as a monument of her piety and aſtronomical knowledge.

In the villages around them is cultivated a ſpecies of melon peculiar to Egypt. They are called *abd-bellaoui*, ſlave of ſweetneſs. Their pulp is firm and brittle like that of an apple. Though leſs ſugary than many other ſorts, they are preferred, becauſe they afford a very wholeſome and agreeable nutriment during the heats. Another vegetable in high eſtimation is a lettuce with large leaves, ſmooth and erect. Whole plains are covered with them. The people conſume a prodigious quantity, and oil is extracted from their ſeed. You, Sir, who collect in your garden, from the various quarters of the globe, the different productions of the earth, to enrich your country,

country, and who cultivate ſo ſucceſsfully every plant, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyſſop, you will pardon me theſe details.

Proceeding on, we diſcover to the right and left hamlets, whoſe inhabitants are employed in cultivating the earth, which in four months will afford them abundant crops. The burgh of *Halouan* appears on the eaſtern bank, ſurrounded by date-trees. The Mekias was eſtabliſhed there when the Arabs conquered Egypt. Memphis ſtood on the oppoſite bank, on the ſpot where the village of *Menph* now ſtands, which ſtill preſerves the name. The teſtimonies of Strabo, of Pliny, and Abulfeda, who have deſcribed its ruins, leave no doubt in that reſpect. Large heaps of rubbiſh are ſtill to be ſeen there; but the Arabs have tranſported to Cairo the columns and remarkable ſtones, which they have diſpoſed, without taſte and without order, in their moſques and public buildings. This city extended as far as Saccara, and was almoſt wholly encompaſſed by lakes, part of which are ſtill

ſubſiſting.

ſubſiſting. It was neceſſary to croſs them to convey the dead to the ſepulchre of their fathers. The tombs, hewn out of the rock, were cloſed up with ſtones of a proportionable ſize, and covered with ſand. Theſe bodies, embalmed with ſo much care, preſerved with ſo much reſpect, are torn from the monuments they repoſe in, and ſold without decency to ſtrangers, by the inhabitants of Saccara. This place is called *the plain of mummies*. There too we find *the well of the birds*, into which one deſcends by means of a rope. It leads to ſubterraneous galleries, filled with earthen vaſes, containing the ſacred birds. They are rarely met with entire, becauſe the Arabs break them, in hopes of finding idols of gold. They do not conduct travellers into the places where they have found more precious articles. They even cloſe them up carefully, reſerving to themſelves ſome ſecret paſſages by which they deſcend. In a journey into Egypt made by the duke de Chaulnes, he advanced very far into theſe winding labyrinths, ſometimes crawling, and ſometimes ſcrambling

on

on his knees. Informed by Mr. Edward Wortley Montague, who has carefully viſited Egypt, he arrived at one of theſe paſſages, which had an opening ſhut up from without by branches of the date-tree intervowen, and covered with ſand. He remarked there ſome hieroglyphics *in relievo*, executed in the higheſt perfection. But the Arabs reſiſted every offer he made them, to permit him to take drawings of them, or to mold them *(f)*, in order to preſerve their form. The duke de Chaulnes is of opinion that theſe hieroglyphics, ſculptured with ſo much art, that the objects they repreſent may be diſcovered at the firſt ſight, might poſſibly furniſh the key of the others, whoſe contours are ſimply expreſſed, and form a ſort of alphabet of this unintelligible language. Whether this ingenious idea be well or ill-founded, I ſhall propoſe to you in a particular letter the methods which might be attempted to explain theſe myſterious characters, and to read on the Egyptian mo-

(f) Memoir on the hieroglyphics of the well of Saccara, by the duke de Chaulnes.

numents

numents the moſt ancient hiſtory of the world.

Several pyramids are diſtinguiſhable along the mountains which bound Saccara on the weſt, the greateſt part of which appear as lofty as thoſe of Giſa: at the ſight of theſe edifices, on which my eyes were fixed in ſpite of myſelf, permit me ſome further reflexions, which I cannot reſiſt. Are theſe mauſolea the fruit of the pride of the Pharaohs? Is it to their vanity we muſt attribute their conſtruction? I know that this is the opinion of ſeveral authors; but let them retain an opinion which has no foundation in the human heart. Kings do not build palaces to inhabit them after death. A more imperious ſentiment, anxiety for the future, the perſuaſion of what muſt happen after this ſhort life, induced the Pharaohs to conſtruct theſe magnificent tombs *(g)*. Their religion taught them, that as long as their bodies could be kept free from corruption, their ſouls would not quit them, and that at the expiration of

(g) Herodotus, Euterpe, ſecond book.

three

three thouſand years they would animate them anew. This dogma made them erect theſe buildings, which the genius of the moſt able architects ſtrove to render inacceſſible. They gave them the *pyramidal form*, as being the moſt durable. This form was connected likewiſe with their worſhip, and formed an act of homage to the ſun, whoſe rays it imitated *(b)*. Theſe edifices therefore are a ſtriking proof that this ancient people believed in the immortality of the ſoul. Kings find themſelves very well in this world. Flowers and harveſts ſpring up for them without any trouble. All nature ſmiles for them, and had they the Egyptian creed,

(b) Pliny, book 36, ſays, that the obeliſks were conſecrated to the ſun; that they repreſented his rays, which is indicated by their Egyptian name. In fact, theſe monuments, as well as the pyramids, were called in Egyptian, *Pyramuē*, *Rays of the ſun*. See Jablonſki, tome 3. The Greeks gave the name of obeliſks to the former, and left that of *pyramids* to the others, which comes from *Pyr*, fire, and in which they have preſerved the ancient etymology. The obeliſks were conſecrated to the ſun, becauſe they ſerved as dials to mark the hours.

we ſhould ſee them bringing forth prodigies, by which they might hope to enſure their return on earth. The religion of Egypt paſſed into Greece, and Artemiſia erected, to the aſhes of her huſband, a tomb in the pyramidal form, one of the ſeven wonders of the univerſe. This idea of an immortal ſoul originating with iſlanders, ſeparated from every poliſhed nation by the immenſity of ſeas, has produced a monument which ought greatly to ſurprize us. The *Otabeiteans*, without the aid of any metal, have cut the hardeſt ſtones, and formed a pyramid, where the body of their queen Oberea repoſes. Her relations and friends, filled with a religious remembrance, go around this *Morai* to pour forth their pious tears; and the ſoul of Oberea taſtes ſome conſolation on beholding their grief and tenderneſs *(i)*.

Let us quit the ſad deſarts of Saccara, where we walk only upon tombs; and thoſe lofty pyramids, which inſpire only melancholy ideas, and that lake, acroſs

(i) Cook's voyage.

which the bodies were conveyed, and which recalls to mind the fable of Charon. Let us return into our bark. With what pleaſure the eyes, ſcorched by the burning ſands, repoſe upon the verdure! With what ſatisfaction one returns from the dwelling of death, which the ſight of theſe places continually brings before your eyes, to enjoy the treaſures of abundance! How delicious are one's feelings on contemplating a ſerene ſky, a majeſtic river, and a country which diſcloſes new riches at every ſtep. It is after ſupporting the frightful picture of ſterility, that one reliſhes, with an inexpreſſible charm, the ſpectacle of teeming nature; ſhe awaits the traveller, expiring on the border of the deſart he has been traverſing, to pour into his heart the ſource of a new life.

We are now ſeven leagues above Old Cairo. It is here that the Nile, repulſed by the rocks projecting from the eaſt, ruſhed formerly to the weſt, and ſpread itſelf over the ſands of Libya. I have marked, by two punctuated lines, upon the

the map, the route it followed. One of the Pharaohs, according to Herodotus *(k)*, barred its paſſage with a dyke, and forced it to reſume its courſe between the mountains. It fell into the gulf which then covered the ſpace now occupied by the Delta, and gave birth to that celebrated iſland, which is advancing with ſlow ſteps into the Mediterranean. The traces of the ancient bed, called by the Arabs, *Bahr bela ma*, The ſea without water, are ſtill viſible. It is ſtrewed its whole length with the wrecks of boats that navigated on it, and are petrified. I have ſeen ſuperb ſpecimens of them brought to Grand Cairo. In going from Saccara to *Dachbour*, we meet with a long mound of earth, thrown up to preſerve Memphis from the inundation of the river, ſhould it happen to break its dyke; and againſt the torrents of ſand hurried by the winds from the Lybian mountains.

(g) Herodotus, book the ſecond. See the firſt letter on Egypt, where this paſſage is diſcuſſed.

At ſome diſtance from this elbow is the iſle of *Terſaie*, where they have begun to plant cucumbers, and water-melons. The Egyptians cultivate a ſort of cucumbers, called *Couſa*, which is very ſmall, and in great eſtimation. The pulp of it is ſweet, tender, and very delicate. They eat it as a ſallad; but the uſual mode of dreſſing it is to take out the ſeeds with an auger, and to fill it up with haſhed meat and rice, mixed with ſpices. Thus dreſſed in its juice, it is excellent eating.

Beyond this iſle we diſcover, within land, the burgh of *Dachbour*. The waters of the Nile are conducted thither by a canal, over which is a ſtone bridge of ſeveral arches. Strabo *(l)* and Ptolemy *(m)* place *Achantus* in the interior of the country, at ſix leagues from Memphis, and on the ſame ſide. This ſituation correſponds perfectly with *Dachbour*. The temple of Oſiris, at this place, was admired. This edifice is entirely deſtroyed; but one remarks

(l) Strabo, book 17.

(m) Ptolemy, book 4.

to

to the weſtward of this village, and on the declivity of the mountain a great pyramid, which forms a continuation of thoſe of Saccara and of Giſa.

The ſandy plains which ſtretch along the hills, are ſtrewed with ſtones, vulgarly called Egyptian flints. Rounded in the ſhape of pebbles, their rugged ſurface has nothing brilliant to invite one to pick them up; but their inſide is of an extremely fine grain, ſuſceptible of a high poliſh: the greateſt part of them are marked with the figures of plants, and one diſtinguiſhes ſhrubs on them, which often compoſe beautiful landſcapes. The dark-brown ſtrokes which mark them, traced with the greateſt elegance, diſplay themſelves with grace on a light-coloured ground. Theſe flints preſent a great variety of deſigns and different ſhades. There is great choice, for the ſands are covered with them. I only ſaw one Jew at Cairo who had the art of working them, and of making boxes or knife-handles with them; he conſequently ſold them very dear. The

hillocks which terminate theſe plains are filled with oyſters and petrified ſhells.

On leaving *Achantus*, and travelling towards the ſouth, we paſs a vaſt country, the lower parts of which are watered by little rivulets, which fertilize them at this ſeaſon. The valleys are at preſent covered with corn, with dourra, and with verdure. At the end of a few months the Nile, on quitting them, will again leave only a deſart. The village of Tamieh, where the canal paſſes, is ſituated at the extremity of this plain.

We are now entering, Sir, into the fertile province of Arſinoé, at preſent called the *Faïoum*; it was the province of wonders. It contained the labyrinth and its twelve palaces, lake Mœris, and its pyramids. I ſhall lay before you what the ancients ſaid of it, and by preſenting you with an exact deſcription of the preſent ſtate of the places and monuments ſtill ſubſiſting, and the ruins we find there, you will be yourſelf able to form a judgment of what they muſt have been.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ANTIQUITIES IN THE PROVINCE OF ARSINOE, NOW FAIOUM.

Comparative topography of this province. Inquiry concerning the monuments, the ſituation of which has been fixed by the ancients, with the preſent ſtate of their ruins. Situation of the labyrinth confirmed by the teſtimony of Herodotus, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, and Ptolemy; and by the ruins of Balad Caroun, *and of* Caſr Caroun. *Deſcription of this wonderful edifice. Reflections on the ſame ſubject. Account of the Lake Mœris. Its extent hitherto diſputed, aſcertained from the evidence of ancient writers. Mechaniſm of the canals and ſluices clearly diſplayed. Actual circumference of this great Lake.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I Have already ſaid that this province contains the remains of Lake Mœris, and

nth.

the ruins of the labyri Egypt poſſeſſes no monuments that have occaſioned more debates amongſt the learned. The extent of the one, and the ſituation of the other have been alternately conteſted. Some geographers, to ſatisfy all parties, have created two labyrinths *(n)*. Other writers have given to Lake Mœris an immenſe circumference *(o)*; and others in ſhort, aſſigning it to the country of fables *(p)*, have diſplayed the charms of their wit in throwing a ridicule on the credulity of hiſtorians. Theſe contradictions have thickened the clouds of uncertainty, and the truth remains at the bottom of the well. Let us endeavour to draw it thence, by explaining ſuch paſſages of the ancients, as have been ſometimes badly interpreted, by following Strabo ſtep by ſtep, who has deſcribed with accuracy the places he viſited as an enlightened man, and eſpecially by making a faithful report of what remains of the

(n) Danville, *Memoirs ſur l'Egypte.*

(o) Rollin, Ancient hiſtory. Boſſuet, *Diſcours ſur l'hiſtoire univerſelle.*

(p) Voltaire.

monuments

monuments he ſpeaks of (q). "*On quit-*
"*ting Acbantus*, ſays this wiſe hiſtorian,
"*we leave on the ſide of Arabia, Aphrodito-*
"*polis (r), where a white ox was fed and*
"*conſecrated by religion.*" The burgh of *Atfih*, according to the beſt geographers (s), occupies the ground of the city of Venus. *On the other ſide of the Nile, is the prefecture of Heraclea, ſituated in a large iſland.* The two canals formed from the river to the lake, the one paſſing near to *Tamieh*, the other taking its riſe at the village of *Bouch*, form this iſland, and the remarkable ruins to be diſcovered near to *Baïamout*, ſeem to point out the poſition of Heraclea (t), the capital of this province. Two ruined pyramids are to be ſeen there with only a few layers of ſtone. Strabo continues: "*Near to*
"*Heraclea runs a canal, which, dividing itſelf*
"*into two branches, forms a ſmall iſland. It*

(q) Strabo, book 17.

(r) The city of Venus.

(s) See Ptolemy, l. 4. Danville, *Mem. ſur l'Egypte*; and Pocock, Journey to the Eaſt.

(t) It was called the great Heraclea, to diſtinguiſh it from another city of Hercules, ſituated in Lower Egypt, at a ſmall diſtance from Canopus.

"*croſſes*

"*croſſes the prefecture of Arſinoé, the moſt* "*beautiful, and the richeſt in Egypt.*" Follow, Sir, this ancient geographer in the map, and you will ſee that there is ſcarcely any alteration in theſe places, and that he conducts us ſtraight to *Faïoum*, the capital of all this country. This town is modern; but a league to the north-eaſt of its walls, large heaps of rubbiſh indicate the veſtiges of Arſinoé *(u)*. The Arabs gather the ſand which covers theſe ruins, and ſift it, to find ſeals and medals. At ſome diſtance is an obeliſk on its pedeſtal. This is the only monument which has braved the injuries of time, and the ravages of the barbarians. It is twenty-two feet, *(French meaſure)* in circumference at the baſe, and about fifty in height. Its ſides are covered with hieroglyphics, divided into columns, and effaced in many places. The corners are broken, and the beautiful piece of granite it is compoſed of, is injured halfway up. Strabo abandons us here, to de-

(u) This city was anciently called Crocodilopolis, from the ſacred crocodiles which were fed there. The Greeks becoming maſters of Egypt, called it Arſinoé.

ſcribe

ſcribe Lake Mœris, which is but a ſmall diſtance from Arſinoé, and the labyrinth built upon its banks. He does not preciſely point out its ſituation; but Herodotus *(x)* and Ptolemy determine it with accuracy, placing it on the ſide of Libya, on the bank of the lake. Let us continue then our journey.

The traveller, on quitting *Faïoum*, and proceeding to the weſtward, croſſes the great canal called *Bahr Iouſeph*, Joſeph's river. The village of *Neſle*, which he leaves on the left, affords him no traces of antiquity. After two hours journey towards the north-weſt, he enters a ſandy plain, where ſterility alone reigns. He ſoon diſcovers mountains of ruins which are near a league in extent. The firſt heap of them is called by the Arabs *balad Caroun*, the burgh of Charon; the ſecond *caſr Caroun*, the palace of Charon *(y)*. The

(x) Herodotus, book 2d. Ptolemy, book 4.

(y) The Arabian hiſtorians deſcribe Charon as a very powerful man. They ſay that he could load ſeveral camels with the keys which opened the numerous apartments that contained his treaſures. This unanimous

The whole ſpace between them is ſtrewed with enormous ſtones. The moſt remarkable ruins are at the extremities. In the midſt of thoſe of *caſr Caroun*, a large edifice riſes up, of which there are ſeveral halls remaining, filled with trunks of columns. A portico half demoliſhed encompaſſes it. One may diſtinguiſh ſtaircaſes, by which they mounted to different apartments; and others by which they deſcended into ſubterraneous paſſages. But what particularly attracts attention, is the view of ſeveral low, narrow, and very long cells, which ſeem to have had no other deſtination, than to contain the bodies of the ſacred crocodiles, brought hither from Crocodilopolis, where they were fed

unanimous aſſertion gives us a glance of a truth. Perhaps in Egypt the name of Charon was a dignity beſtowed on the boatmen who conveyed the bodies of the Pharaohs over Lake Mœris, to depoſit them in the cells of the labyrinth, of which he was the keeper. Doubtleſs he who performed the ſame office on the lake of Memphis, with reſpect to the inhabitants of that city, had the ſame title. If this conjecture be true, we ſhall diſcover why the Greeks gave the name of Charon to the boatman of hell, and why the Arabs call theſe ruins the palace of Charon.

by

by the prieſts, and honoured by a particular worſhip. Theſe ruins, placed towards Lybia, at a league's diſtance from *Birket Caroun*, formerly Lake Mœris, can only correſpond with the Labyrinth, for the ancients *(z)* aſſigned it this poſition, and point out no town on that ſide. Since we are walking on the ſands which partly cover this famous monument, let us read the deſcription of it in Herodotus, that we may form a juſt idea of it.

" *(a)* The twelve kings choſen by the " Egyptians, conſtructed the labyrinth on " the borders of Lake Mœris, on the ſide " of the city of Crocodiles. This edifice " appeared to me beyond what fame had " ſaid of it. If we pay attention to the " conſtruction of the walls, to the nature " of the work, it will be impoſſible to

(z) See Strabo, l. 17. Herodotus, l. 2. Ptolemy, l. 4. All theſe authors agree in placing the labyrinth beyond the city of *Arſinoe*, on the Lybian ſide, and on the banks of Lake Mœris. This is exactly the ſituation where we meet with the ruins I have been deſcribing.

(a) Herodotus, book ſecond.

appreciate

" appreciate the immenſe ſums this build-
" ing muſt have coſt. The temple of
" Epheſus is one of the wonders of the
" world; the pyramids in the iſle of Sa-
" mos do not yield in grandeur to any of
" works of Greece: yet theſe monuments,
" whatever be their magnificence, can-
" not be compared with the Labyrinth *(b)*.
" A roof of a vaſt extent covers its twelve
" palaces. The entrance to them is by
" twelve gates, ſix of which are to
" the north, and ſix to the ſouth. A
" thick wall, of great length, encompaſſes
" them. The whole edifice conſiſts of
" two ſtories, one above ground, the
" other ſubterraneous, each of which con-
" tains fifteen hundred apartments. I
" have viſited the former, and relate what
" I have ſeen. As to the latter, the
" keepers would not allow me to deſcend
" into them, telling me, that the bodies
" of the kings who had built them were

(b) Recollect, Sir, that it is a Greek who ſpeaks, and who reads his hiſtory in the preſence of the moſt enlightened men of his age, at an aſſembly of the Olympic games, where he was crowned.

" preſerved

" preſerved there, and thoſe of the ſacred " Crocodiles; I know nothing further, " therefore, than what they told me. " Human induſtry has diſplayed all its " reſources, in the diſtribution of the up- " per ſtory. The porticoes, the paſſages " which lead from the halls into the cham- " bers, from the chambers into the " cloſets, from the cloſets to the ter- " races, from the terraces into the other " apartments, form ſuch numerous wind- " ings, return into each other in ſuch va- " rious ways, that I was never tired of ad- " miring the art which has been made uſe " of in its ſtructure. The walls, the roofs, " are all of ſtone. Here and there one " ſees different figures ſculptured with " an artiſt's hand. The halls are ſur- " rounded by majeſtic columns, chiefly of " white marble. A pyramid, each ſide of " which is two hundred and fifty feet wide, " and by which one deſcends into the " caverns, terminates the labyrinth."

Such is the deſcription of Herodotus. Although that of Strabo *(c)*, who viſited

(c) Strabo, l. 17.

the

the ſame monument ſeveral ages after him, does not agree with him in every point, it confirms, however, his account. He deſcribes, like Herodotus, the winding paſſages, the varied routes with which art had ſo contrived theſe labyrinths, that it was impoſſible, without a guide, to enter any one of theſe palaces, or to get out, after once entering it. He ſays that the principal apartments were ſurrounded by magnificent columns, that the walls were conſtructed of maſſes of rocks, and that from the top of the roof one perceived an immenſe platform, reſembling a plain of ſtones, the ſight of which aſtoniſhed the imagination. It is true, Strabo pretends that the labyrinth was compoſed of twenty-ſeven palaces, wherein the prefectures of Egypt were aſſembled at a certain period, to treat of the moſt important affairs of the ſtate and of religion; but it is probable that the twelve, which Herodotus ſpeaks of, were afterwards divided into twenty-ſeven parts; or, that during the interval of ſeveral ages between theſe two hiſtorians, this edifice was enlarged.

Diodorus

Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, and Pomponius Mela have deſcribed the labyrinth without having ſeen it. They confined themſelves to the copying and embelliſhing the recital of the two former authors; they furniſh us therefore with nothing new. The founder of this edifice is unknown. Each writer *(d)* names one or more, and almoſt all different. This variety of opinions affords a preſumption that it was not the work of one, but of ſeveral kings.

This monument, which Pliny look upon as the moſt aſtoniſhing production of the human genius, no longer ſubſiſts but in

(d) Herodotus ſays, that the labyrinth was built by the twelve princes who governed Egypt, when Pſammeticus, one of the twelve, uſurped the ſovereign power.

Strabo attributes the conſtruction of it to Pharaoh *Imandes*, and pretends that his body repoſes in the pyramid which terminates the encloſure.

Pliny will have it to have been conſtructed by Peteſuc or Tithoé; but as he quotes ſeveral contradictory authorities, theſe different opinions only increaſe the uncertainty.

Diodorus Siculus thinks that the labyrinth is the work and the tomb of Pharaoh Mendés.

Pomponius Mela attributes it to Pſammeticus.

the ruins of *Balad Caroun*, and *Caſr Caroun*. Some day perhaps, when Europe ſhall have reſtored to Egypt the ſciences ſhe received from her, the ſands and rubbiſh may be removed which have buried the lower ſtory of the labyrinth, and very precious antiquities may be diſcovered. Who knows whether the diſcoveries of the learned were not depoſited in this aſylum, impenetrable to the people and to ſtrangers? If the reſearches into Herculaneum, a city of little note, have reſcued from oblivion ſo many rarities, ſo many inſtructive monuments for the arts, and hiſtory, what may not be expected from fifteen hundred apartments which might have been the repoſitory of the archives of Egypt, ſince all the prefectures were aſſembled here to treat of affairs of ſtate and of religion? But I muſt not dwell on conjectures. You are impatient, doubtleſs, to know Lake Mœris, the remains of which are ſtill ſufficiently great to merit your attention.

Herodotus *(e)* and Strabo *(f)* mark out

(e) Herodotus, l. ſecond.

(f) Strabo, l. 17

its

its ſite by placing the labyrinth on its borders, and by fixing the towns which were around it, ſuch as Achantus to the ſouth, Aphroditopolis towards the eaſt, and Arſinoé to the north. Diodorus Siculus *(g)* and Pliny *(b)* confirm theſe authorities, by placing it at twenty-four leagues from Memphis, between the province of that name and that of Arſinoé. This unanimity of ſentiment gives in fact every degree of certainty we could wiſh for. If the lake however had totally diſappeared, like Mareotis, one might ſtill have one's doubts; but in the ſituation marked by theſe hiſtorians, we ſee in our days a lake, known by the name of *Birket Caroun*, more than fifty leagues in circumference. We cannot therefore, without perſiſting againſt evidence, refuſe to recognize the remains of that of Mœris. Let us examine what the ancients ſaid of it. By weighing with a ſcrupulous attention their teſtimonies, we ſhall perhaps be able to clear up a point

(g) Diodorus Siculus, l. 1.

(b) Pliny, l. 5.

of topography enveloped in profound darkneſs.

" The labyrinth, ſays Herodotus, ſuch as " I have been deſcribing it, is ſtill leſs ſur- " prizing than the Mœris. This lake is in " circumference 3600 ſtadia, or 60 ſchenes, " which form the dimenſions of the ma- " ritime baſe of Egypt, (ſeventy-five " leagues *(i)*.) It ſtretches from north to ſouth,

(i) Herodotus has fixed the meaſure of the ſchene, in Lower Egypt, at four miles, or a league and a quarter. Thus the 60 ſchenes make 75 leagues. Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, who have employed other meaſures to eſtimate the ſame extent of country, agree however with Herodotus. The baſe of Egypt therefore remains determined at 75 leagues, and ſince it is equal to the circumference of lake Mœris, that lake was only 75 leagues round. I am compelled to enter into theſe particulars, becauſe this paſſage has produced many errors. Writers in general paying attention to the firſt member of the ſentence of Herodotus, in which he fixes the extent of the lake at 3600 ſtadia, and allowing each ſtadium its uſual eſtimation of about 100 toiſes, have given 150 or 180 leagues circumference to lake Mœris. But whoever reflects on this paſſage, will ſee that the meaſure of 3600 ſtadia is there determined by 60 ſchenes, or 75 leagues, and that the author conſequently has made

" ſouth *(k)*, and its greateſt depth is three
" hundred feet. Two pyramids, con-
" ſtructed in an iſland towards the mid-
" dle, riſe from three hundred feet be-
" low water, and are as high out of it,
" which proves that it has been dug
" by the hand of man. Each of them has
" on its ſummit a coloſſal ſtatue, ſeated
" on a throne. Their total elevation,
" taken from the baſe, is a ſtadium of

made uſe of ſtadia of 50 toiſes. I do not know whether any one has made this remark before me, but I know that from this paſſage ill conſtrued, have ſprung all the debates of the moderns. M. de Voltaire has combated with the weapon of pleaſantry the exiſtence of a lake of 180 leagues, which is greater, ſays he, than all Egypt. M. Rollin, and eſpecially Boſſuet, have warmly maintained it. Several writers have reſtricted its extent, and limited it to twenty leagues. M. Danville, deſirous of conciliating all parties, in his map of Egypt, has created a great canal, to which he gives the name of Lake Mœris. But he has not been more fortunate than others, ſince the form and ſituation of this pretended Mœris are abſolutely contrary to the moſt reſpectable authorities in hiſtory.

(k) At this day its greateſt dimenſion is from eaſt to weſt, but formerly it might extend from Arſinoe as far asth e canal, for the diſcharge of the waters.

" ſix hundred feet *(l)*. Lake Mœris
" occupies a ſoil very dry, and deſtitute
" of ſprings. It derives its waters from
" the Nile, which runs there during ſix
" months. The reſt of the year it reſtores
" them to the river. During the for-
" mer period, the fiſhery produces a ta-
" lent of ſilver daily, to the royal trea-
" ſury, and twenty minas only, during
" the latter. According to the natives
" of the country, a canal is pierced *(m)*
" acroſs the mountain, the extended chain
" of which commands Memphis. This
" is an outlet by which the ſuperfluous
" waters are poured into the ſands of
" Lybia, on the weſtern ſide. I en-
" quired what had become of the earth
" taken from the lake; they aſſured
" me that it had been conveyed to the

(l) In theſe two paſſages Herodotus employs the meaſure of ſtadia; but as he had at firſt reduced them to 50 toiſes, and afterwards reſtores them to their full eſtimation, he takes care to apprize us that they are ſtadia of 600 feet.

(m) I have marked on the map, at the beginning of this volume, the ſituation of this canal.

" river,

" river, and carried by the current to the " ſea."

Let us join the report of Strabo to that of Herodotus; they throw mutual light upon each other *(n)*. " The province of Ar- " ſinoe contains the wonderful lake of " Mœris. It reſembles the ſea in its extent, " its colour, and its ſhores. As deep as it " is vaſt, it receives at the beginning of the " inundation, the waters which would " otherwiſe cover the harveſts and the " habitations of men: they are conducted " thither by a great canal. When the Nile " ſubſides, they return by two other canals " (thoſe of *Tamieh*, and of *Bouch*,) which, " as well as the former, ſerve for water- " ing the fields: all this is naturally " performed. At the head of the canals, " ſluices are formed, which are opened at " pleaſure, whether to introduce, or to " let off the waters *(o)*."

(n) Strabo, l. 17.

(o) Diodorus Siculus pretends that it coſt fifty talents, that is to ſay, 150,000 livres, to open theſe ſluices. It is not eaſy to diſcover what has made him adopt this fable. It is certain, however, that Herodotus and

If this paſſage does not fix the extent of the lake, it proves at leaſt that it was very conſiderable, and that it could not be determined by the eye. Diodorus Siculus refers to the opinion of Herodotus, who gives Lake Mœris three thouſand ſix hundred ſtadia, that is to ſay, ſeventy-five leagues circumference. Pliny eſtimates it at two hundred and fifty thouſand paces, which make about eighty leagues. Thus then, you ſee antiquity agreed on a point which has given riſe to ſo many diſcuſſions among the moderns, without any of them being able to eſtabliſh his ſyſtem on a ſolid baſis, and unite every opinion. At preſent this lake is only about fifty leagues round; but this diminution by no means proves that Herodotus and Pliny were de-

and Strabo, who have been on the ſpot, who have examined them with attention, do not ſpeak of it. Pliny, and Pomponius Mela, who report what the ancients have written on the ſubject of lake Mœris, and who would not have omitted ſo extraordinary a fact, make no mention of it. So much improbability, joined to the ſilence of hiſtorians, demonſtrates the falſity of this aſſertion.

ceived

ceived in their calculations. Conſidering the revolutions, which have moleſted Egypt for a ſeries of two thouſand years, it might have undergone ſtill greater changes.

Fix your eyes, Sir, on the map of this country, you will ſee that the chain of mountains which follows the courſe of the Nile, at a very little diſtance on the left, from the cataracts, as far as *Faioum*, ſtretches off ſuddenly on the ſide of Lybia, then returning towards the eaſt, forms in its contours an immenſe baſon. Although lower than the bed of the river, this hollow was once covered with a barren ſand, becauſe the waters, ſtopped by the downs and the rocks, could not penetrate there. One of the Pharaohs, called Mœris, knowing perfectly the ſituation of the country, conceived one of the moſt noble deſigns ever projected by the human mind, and had the glory of carrying it into execution. He determined to change this deſert into an uſeful lake. After ſome thouſands of men collected together, had cleared out, and dug the ſoil in ſeveral places, he drew a canal of forty leagues in length, and three hundred feet wide,

wide, for the purpoſe of conducting thither a part of the waters of the Nile. This great canal, which ſtill ſubſiſts entire at this day, is known under the name of *Bahr Iouſeph*, Joſeph's river.

It opens near *Tarout Eccherif*, and ends at *Berkit Caroun*. This work muſt have coſt immenſe ſums; for in ſeveral places it is cut out of the rock. It was not enough to have diſengaged Egypt from the exceſs of the inundation, which in thoſe remote ages remained too long on the lands, at that time lower than they are in our days, and occaſioned its ſterility; it was neceſſary alſo, to render theſe waters uſeful to agriculture. This great prince ſucceeded in this, by drawing two other canals from the lake to the river. At their opening were formed two ſluices, which were kept ſhut during the increaſe of the Nile; then the waters conveyed by the canal of Joſeph, were heaped up in the vaſt encloſure of Lake Mœris, encompaſſed with dykes and mountains. During the ſix months that the Nile was on the decline, theſe ſluices were opened, and a ſurface of water of about

eighty

eighty leagues in circumference, and thirty feet (p) higher than the ordinary level of the river, formed a ſecond inundation to be directed at pleaſure. One part returned to the Nile, and ſerved for the navigation. The other part branched out into innumerable rivulets, watered the fields, and diffuſed fertility even to the very ſandy hills. This work, the greateſt and the moſt uſeful ever executed on earth, united every advantage. It ſupplied the deficiency of water in years of a moderate overflow, by retaining thoſe precious waters, which otherwiſe would have flowed uſeleſly to the ſea. Its benefits were ſtill more ſtrongly marked in the time of a great inundation. It received that hurtful ſuperfluity of them, which would have pre-

(p) The canal of Joſeph having its ſource in the Thebais, conveyed to lake Mœris the waters of the Nile from the commencement of the increaſe. As they were continually confined, on one ſide by the mountains, on the other by dykes and ſluices, placed on the canals of *Bouch* and of *Tamieh*, they roſe to the height of the inundation, that is to ſay, about thirty feet above the uſual level of the river.

vented

vented the ſowing of the earth. Leſt this artificial ſea ſhould break down the barriers that were oppoſed to it, and cauſe frightful devaſtation in the country, a canal was cut through the mountains, by which the ſuperfluous waters were poured into the ſands of Lybia. Behold, Sir, one of the moſt glorious labours of which the hiſtory of nations has ever made mention. It is not aſtoniſhing that antiquity ſhould have ranked it before the pyramids and the labyrinth. It combined the happineſs of the people with the grandeur of the enterprize. Accordingly, the Egyptians, though they abhorred the Pharaohs, who forced them to excavate mountains, to build themſelves ſuperb tombs, bleſſed the memory of Mœris; and his name is handed down to poſterity.

At preſent this lake has loſt almoſt all its advantages. From the period of near twelve hundred years that Egypt has fallen into the hands of barbarous nations, they have either deſtroyed, or ſuffered to periſh, the chief part of theſe monuments. The Mareotis is dried up, the Canal of Alexandria

dria is no longer navigable, and the Mœris is only fifty leagues in circumference. If the canal of Joſeph were cleared out, where the mud is collected to a vaſt height; if the ancient dykes were re-eſtabliſhed, and the ſluices of the canals of *Tamieh* and of *Bouch*, Lake Mœris would ſtill ſerve the ſame purpoſes. It would prevent the devaſtations of the too great ſwellings of the river, and ſupply the deficiency of thoſe which are inadequate We ſhould ſee it, as heretofore, extending itſelf from Neſle and Arſinoé to the Lybian mountains, and offering to the view of the aſtoniſhed traveller, a ſea formed by the hand of man.

The depth of three hundred feet, aſcribed to it by hiſtorians, muſt be exaggerated, but much leſs ſo than may be imagined. The bottom which it occupies, is a baſon formed by the mountains. It is very low, ſince the Nile runs into it even by the canal of *Tamieh (q)*. In ſhort, however the mud

(q) The contrary happened formerly. As Lake Mœris received a greater quantity of waters by the canal

mud may have gradually collected in a ſeries of ages, it is ſtill of a great depth. If all theſe reaſons cannot prevail upon us to adopt the ſentiments of the ancients, they will at leaſt compel us to ſuſpend our judgment, and to examine the places and the times, before we diſmiſs their narratives to the region of chimeras.

The pyramids deſcribed by Herodotus, no longer exiſt. It appears even, that they exiſted not in the time of Auguſtus, as Strabo does not ſpeak of them. In our days, we may remark to the north of *Birket Caroun*, a promontory, which doubtleſs was formerly an iſland. It is terminated by a rock covered with ruins. This was perhaps the foundation of theſe Mauſolea, which bore on their ſummits two coloſſal ſtatues ſeated upon thrones, and which, commanding the whole extent of the waters, muſt have formed a coup d'œil unparalleled in nature. I do not give you

nal of Joſeph, which was deeper, and preſerved them by means of ſluices, it reſtored them afterwards to the Nile when it was low, by the canals of *Tamieh*, and of *Bouch*.

theſe conjectures for realities; but you will agree with me, Sir, that it was not more difficult to conſtruct pyramids on an iſland in the middle of Lake Mœris, than to erect thoſe which are near to Giſa. I ſtop here, and fear I have entered into details already too tedious, but abſolutely neceſſary, when one wiſhes to ſearch out the truth from amongſt ſo many contradictions, and is deſirous of ſhewing it to thoſe, who, like you, Sir, paſſionately admire it.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

Account of the Cultivation, and the Inhabitants of Faioum.

Remarks on the productions of this province, its manufactures, arts, and inhabitants. Deſcription of the fields ſhaded with groves of orange-trees, and with roſe-buſhes of great height, the flower of which, by diſtillation, yields an excellent roſe-water. Great fiſhery of the lake and canals. The numerous birds which cover the waters. Account of the chief town, and its government.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE preceding letter, Sir, offers to your mind diſcuſſions only, and nothing but ruins to your view. This every man muſt expect, who wiſhes to tear the veil from thoſe monuments, which time has hid for three thouſand years. To make up for it, I am going to preſent you with the

the preſent ſtate of culture in the *Faïoum*. I hope this ſubject will furniſh us with more agreeable pictures. The approach of winter forms here the gayeſt ſeaſon of the year. The breath of the winds, in general ſweet, and perfumed as in the fineſt days of ſpring in France, has ſomething ſtill more flattering, more balſamic, and odoriferous; the waters flow in full ſtreams in the canals, and the earth is clothing herſelf with vegetables, herbs, and harveſts. The images of beauteous nature ſurround us on every ſide. This province is one of the richeſt and moſt fertile in Egypt. See what Strabo ſaid of it eighteen centuries before us *(r)*:

" The province of Arſinoé ſurpaſſes all " the reſt, by its beauty, its riches, " and the variety of its productions. It " alone produces olives, whoſe fruit is " excellent, and from which the Egyp- " tians might make fine oil, were they " not ſo negligent. One ſees none " of theſe trees in the reſt of Egypt,

(r) Strabo, l. 17.

"except ſuch as are cultivated in the "gardens of Alexandria; but their fruit "does not ſerve to make oil *(s)*. This "prefecture abounds in wine, corn, ve-"getables, and ſeeds of every kind." If this hiſtorian were to return into the *Faïoum*, he would find a great alteration; he would there ſee the labyrinth deſtroyed, cottages in the place of palaces, hamlets built of mud, where flouriſhing cities once ſtood, the canals nearly choked up, and the ſea of Mœris reduced to two thirds of its extent; but he would ſtill diſcover the productions he has deſcribed, and the ſame abundance wherever the waters can be conveyed. The Copti ſtill cultivate there the olive and the vine, planted by their fathers. They gather an excellent grape, of which they make

(s) Since the canal of Alexandria is become dry for nine months of the year, theſe gardens have diſappeared with the trees, and olive plants collected there. I have ſeen ſome in the orchards near Roſetta. They grow very large, and the olives they produce are longer, and more fleſhy than thoſe of the Iſle of Crete, and of Provence. I am perſuaded they would yield very good oil.

a white

a white wine of a very agreeable flavour *(t)*. The whole country is at preſent covered with corn, with barley, with dourra, or Indian millet, which follow each other in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion during ſeven or eight months. The ſuperb flax, the ſugar-cane, all ſorts of vegetables ſpring up there almoſt without culture. The cucumber, and near twenty ſorts of melons, of a melting, ſugary, and very wholeſome quality, line the banks of the rivulets. Groves of fruit trees, amongſt which one diſcovers the date-tree, the fig-tree, the banana, the caſſia, and the prickly nabc, which produces a ſmall pear, of a ſharpiſh flavour, are here and there diſperſed over the plain. Amidſt this diverſity of trees and plants, the traveller near the villages meets with groves

(t) In the time of the Ptolemies, and under the empire of the Romans, the environs of Alexandria and the Sebennitic province, produced very famous wine. The Mahometans have deſtroyed theſe excellent vine plants. The only ones they ſpared are in the province of the *Faïoum*. In general, the grape that grows in the ſandy ſoil of Egypt, is of an exquiſite flavour.

of roſe-trees. In the other province this beautiful ſhrub ſerves only as an ornament for the gardens. Here it is collected in clumps, and the roſe-water diſtilled from its odoriferous flower, forms a valuable branch of commerce. *Faïoum* furniſhes all Egypt with it. There is a vaſt conſumption of it. In ceremonial viſits *(u)*, it is ſprinkled with profuſion on the faces and hands of the aſſiſtants. At the bath, the women waſh their bodies with it, nor can their toilet be completed without roſe-water. Theſe cluſters of roſe-trees, ſometimes ſurrounded by orange-trees in bloſſom, produce a charming effect to the eye, and ſtill more delicious to the ſmell. The air around them is perfumed with the odour; and in this warm climate, under ſo ſerene a ſky, one has a more lively ſenſe of the voluptuouſneſs of breathing the perfumes of the roſe, mixed with the ſweet emanations of the orange-flower.

(u) The roſe-water of the *Faïoum* has a very high odour, which it preſerves a long time. The beſt is ſold at four livres a bottle.

To

To the treaſures of a fertile ſoil, the *Faïoum* joins the advantages of the fiſhery. The canals and the great lake are full of fiſh; a prodigious quantity of them is taken, and conſumed on the ſpot, and carried to the neighbouring markets. Fiſh is not dearer here than at Damietta. For a *medin (x)*, a man may procure food enough for a whole day.

When winter is covering the northern countries with ſnow and hoar froſt, innumerable flocks of birds come to winter on Lake Mœris, and the canals of *Faïoum*. The inhabitants take a vaſt quantity of geeſe with yellow plumage, and of an exquiſite flavour; wild ducks, whoſe fleſh is fat and delicate; teals, ſwans, of whoſe ſkin they make furs, and pelicans, remarkable for their large flat beak. The latter, the kings of aquatic birds, navigate in numerous families on the ſurface of Lake Mœris, and the whiteneſs of their plumage forms an agreeable contraſt to

(x) A piece of plated copper, which is worth five liards of our money.

the deep azure of the waters. The modern Egyptians have preſerved the remains of their ancient veneration for the ibis, the crane, and the ſtork. They never ſpread their nets for them, and theſe birds, truſting to the clemency of men, are almoſt tame.

What joy would it afford my heart to be able to paint to you a free people in the midſt of this land of plenty. But, alas! the anarchy of a monſtrous government, the enemy of order, and of laws, extinguiſhes genius, and, like a peſtilential wind, depopulates the cities, and deſtroys the country and its inhabitants. The ſame men who, under a ſerene ſky, and on a teeming ſoil, would have gentle and amiable manners, and would enjoy the treaſures of prodigal nature, and the benefits of the arts, become barbarous, ſuperſtitious, and miſerable under the yoke of twenty-four inſatiable tyrants, who enrich themſelves with their ſubſtance. Agriculture languiſhes, and every year the ſands of Lybia rob it of a portion of its domain. The beautiful provinces of Heraclea

raclea and Arſinoé are at this day reduced to the third of their extent, if we conſider only the arable lands. By re-eſtabliſhing the dykes and the canals, they would recover their ancient limits, and the flouriſhing ſtate they once enjoyed. For the climate, the ſoil, the waters are the ſame. The men only, and the laws have changed.

The cities of the Crocodile, of Hercules, and Ptolemaïs, which ſerved them as a port, are replaced by that of the *Faïoum*, which in the time of Abulfeda was ſtill of ſome conſequence He ſpeaks thus of it *(y)*. " *Faïoum*, the capital " of the province of that name, poſſeſſes " public baths, markets, and colleges, " which are under the diſcipline of the " *(z) Chafeites* and the *Melchites*. The ca- " nal of Joſeph divides it into two parts. It " is ſurrounded by gardens." At preſent *Faïoum* is only half a league round; it is ſituated on the eaſtern bank of the canal. The remainder is deſtroyed. The colleges ſubſiſt no longer. The houſes, built

(y) Abulfeda, Deſcription of Egypt.

(z) Two Mahometan ſects.

with brick, hardened in the ſun, offer the dreary aſpect of a heap of cottages. Their inhabitants are poor, and without energy; all the arts are reduced to ſome manufactures of mats, ſome clumſy carpets, and the diſtillation of roſe-water. This town is governed by a Cachef, in the name of one of the Beys of Grand Cairo. Several Arabian Scheiks who poſſeſs lands in the neighbourhood, compoſe his council: they repair to the Divan two or three times a week, according to the invitations of the governor. Their chief is held in great eſtimation. Harmony cannot long reign amongſt the members of adminiſtration. The wars continually breaking out at Grand Cairo, affect the tranquillity of the provinces. The victorious party deprives the poſſeſſors of their governments and their lands. The Arabs, who have been pillaged, join with the Bedouins, who are always ready to favour the malecontents, from the hope of plunder. They deſcend in torrents from the mountains, and ſpread deſolation over

the

the plains. The undiſciplined troops ſent againſt them, produce no leſs havock. The countryman is pillaged alike by his enemy, and his defender. If the Arabs are repulſed, they retire into the deſerts laden with booty. There, their hatred againſt the Turks ferments with the fire of their ſun, and when they feel themſelves ſufficiently in force, they return to commit new ravages. Such is the fate of Egypt. Such are the evils attendant on deſpotiſm.

Permit me, Sir, to finiſh this letter by an anecdote reported by Strabo, and which proves to what a degree the attention paid to the moſt ferocious animals may triumph over their ferocity. "The pre-"fecture of Arſinoé, ſays he, reveres the "crocodile, and looks upon it as ſacred. "The prieſts preſerve one of them in a "particular lake, and call it *ſoucos (a)*.

(*a*) This word is taken from the Greek. It appears that the Egyptian name for the crocodile was, *Chemſah*, which Herodotus gives it, or perhaps *Themſah*, as the Arabs call it.

"They

"They nouriſh it with bread, fleſh, and "wine, which they give it in the pre- "ſence of ſtrangers, attracted by this "ſpectacle. Our hoſt, one of the reſ- "pectable perſonages who ſhewed us the "ſacred things, conducted us after dinner "to the lake, carrying with him ſome "little cakes, ſome roaſt meat, and a vaſe "filled with wine. The crocodile was "repoſing himſelf on the bank. The "prieſts approached him, one of them "opened his mouth, another put the cakes, "and the fleſh and wine into it. After "this repaſt the monſter deſcended quietly "into the water, and ſwam to the other "ſide."

The Egyptians honoured the crocodile, becauſe he was conſecrated to Typhon, an evil genius, whoſe fury they dreaded. They thought to calm his indignation, and avert the calamities with which he afflicted them, by honouring an animal which was his ſymbolical image. The eagerneſs with which the inhabitants of Celebes ſeek after this monſter at this day;

day; the name of *Sudara (b)*, or *brother*, which they beſtow upon it; the food they carry it, muſt alſo be founded on the ancient worſhip of their country.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(b) Cook's Voyage. Sir Joſeph Banks relates ſome curious facts reſpecting the veneration of the inhabitants of Celebes for the crocodile.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

TRAVELS IN THE DESART, ADJOINING TO THE RED SEA.

Deſcription of the Country, the mountains, and the ſands which it is neceſſary to paſs over in going to the monaſtery of St. Anthony. Obſervations on the plants which grow in thoſe deſarts, on the animals which inhabit it, and on the quarries of marble and flint ſtones. Manner of living of the religious belonging to the monaſtery of St. Anthony and St. Paul. Deſcription of the extenſive proſpect from the top of mount Colſoum. Reflections on the great events which have happened in that quarter.

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

LET us continue our route, Sir. On returning towards the Nile, by the canal of *Bouch*, we leave behind us Maïdoum,

doum, where we remark the moſt ſoutherly pyramid of Egypt, ſeveral iſlands with hamlets, and the ruins of *Aphroditopolis*, which was ſituated on the eaſtern bank where *Atfih* now ſtands.

The canal we quit, formerly poured its waters into the river for ſix months of the year. At preſent it conveys them the whole year into lake Mœris, which does not receive a ſufficient quantity by Joſeph's canal, half choked up as it is, to be able to reſtore any to the Nile.

Bouch affords nothing remarkable. The houſes are built of brick, and the roofs riſe up in the form of pigeon-houſes. The Egyptians dwell on the ground floor, and the pigeons on the firſt. This practice is general throughout the reſt of the Thebais. Theſe houſes make ſome figure at a diſtance, but on entering them, one diſcovers nothing but ſigns of miſery in the midſt of an abundantly rich country.

For ſeveral leagues, the chain of mountains which bounds the river on the eaſt, approaches it very near, leaving only a ſmall extent of country, fit for agriculture.

ture. This ſtrip of land, which extends along the foot of barren rocks, is interſperſed with villages, ſurrounded by coppices, by harveſts, by vegetables, and fruit trees. It is Nature decorated with her treaſures at the entrance of the deſert.

Aſcending, we fall in with *Beniſouef*, to the weſtward of the Nile. This town is half a league in circumference. The moſques, the lofty minarets one diſcovers through the tops of the trees, preſent an agreeable coup-d'œil; but the other buildings are only cottages of brick or earth, built without elegance, and without taſte. All the induſtry of the inbabitants is confined to a manufacture of coarſe carpets; their whole commerce to the ſale of the produce of their ſoil. *Beniſouef* is the reſidence of a Bey, who, as well as the other governors of Egypt, levies with an armed force his arbitrary tributes. During ſeveral months of the year, he encamps with his ſoldiers near the villages under his juriſdiction. After exhauſting the ſubſiſtence of the countrymen, and wreſting from them, by dint of fear or violence,

violence, the fruit of their labours, he ſits down near another burgh to exact ſimilar contributions. It is impoſſible for me to paint to you all the vexations exerciſed by theſe tyrants. The troops under their command are entirely compoſed of banditti, whoſe crimes have driven them from their country. Pity, and all the ſentiments of nature are extinguiſhed in their hearts. To give you an idea of this, I I ſhall only lay before you a ſingle anecdote, which the Count d'Entragues, who has juſt left this country was a witneſs to. His boat had ſtopped near a village of the Delta. One of theſe extortioners entered the hut of a poor woman who had ſeveral children: he preſſed her to pay the tax impoſed by the Bey. She repreſented her miſery, and told him, that ſhe poſſeſſed only one mat, and a few earthen jars. He made a cloſe ſearch, and having found a bag of rice, was preparing to carry it off. She conjured him to deſiſt, aſſuring him that this was her whole ſubſiſtence. "Will you then", ſays ſhe, "make "me die of hunger, and this infant I am "ſuckling,

"ſuckling, and all my family?" The barbarian, unmoved at theſe tender words, and the ſhower of tears he forced from her, takes up the bag of rice. On this the wretched mother in deſpair, tears the boy ſhe was ſuckling from her boſom, and daſhed him on the earth. "There, "monſter, his blood be on your head." After this frightful action ſhe inſtantly dried up her tears, and ſtood motionleſs as a ſtatue. The ſavage ſoldier went off with his prey, without diſcovering the leaſt emotion! Such is the unhappy lot of the people of Egypt.

Over againſt *Beniſouef* ſtands the village of *Baïad*, partly inhabited by Copti. It is from hence that one goes to the monaſteries of St. Antony and St. Paul, ſituated on mount Colzoum. As theſe ſavage ſpots merit the attention of naturaliſts, I ſhall give you a haſty ſketch of them. It will afford you ſome knowledge of the deſarts that extend from the Nile to the Red Sea.

Two leagues to the north of *Baïad*, we enter into a narrow valley, formed by *Gebel*

bel Gebei, the hill of the ciſtern, and *Hajar Mouſſoum*, the marked ſtone. This gulley leads to a ſandy plain, called *Elbakara*, the cow. Mount *Kaleil*, or the hill of the well-beloved, terminates it to the eaſt. It is ſeven or eight leagues wide, and much more from north to ſouth. Its whole extent preſents nothing to the eye but a barren ſand. One finds only in the chinks of the rocks, and by the ſides of the winter torrents, a little verdure, ſome acacias, which produce the gum-arabic, ſenna, ſcorpion-wood, the crooked root of which is famous as an antidote againſt the bite of that inſect, and ſome other plants: Oſtriches, camels, gazels, and tygers, which make continual war on them, inhabit the caverns in the rocks, and bound acroſs theſe ſands, where they find with difficulty a few patches of graſs. One finds here flints of various colours, red, grey, black, and blue, and all of a very fine grain; their ſurface, which is expoſed to the air, is waved and rugged: that next the ſand is poliſhed and brilliant. Undoubtedly the attentive naturaliſt would

find in the chinks of the rocks, and the bed of the torrents, precious ſtones, and eſpecially emeralds, formerly very common in Egypt. At the bottom of Mount *Kaleil* there are ſprings of brackiſh water, which is drank in times of neceſſity. The wild beaſts, men themſelves, have no other to quench their thirſt with. They are ſurrounded by a few date-trees. Above we ſee the grottoes of hermits, whom the fervour of devotion had led, in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, into this dreadful ſolitude.

After climbing up Mount *Kaleil*, we deſcend into the plain of *Elaraba*, or of waggons, which is not leſs ſterile, nor leſs ardent than the former. Its ſurface is covered with arid ſands; it is ſurrounded by burnt rocks; a few winter torrents traverſe it; the ſun deſtroys there every vegetable ſubſtance; but whilſt it deprives plants and trees of life, it matures in the ſides of the mountains the rareſt ſtones. Towards the north of this plain we diſcover three quarries of red, white, and black marble. Blocks half hewn out of the rock,

rock, others diſperſed around it, announce the labours of man.

It was here that the Pharaohs made them hew thoſe hard and poliſhed ſtones, of which they formed the covering, and the paſſages of their ſuperb mauſolea. They were conveyed on waggons to the Nile, from whence they were tranſported on rafts to the foot of the pyramids *(c)*. To the ſouth of theſe quarries is another of beautiful granite, which has been greatly worked. A reſervoir of water, dug a little way off, ſerved the purpoſes of the workmen; further on are grottoes of hermits, who could not in the whole world have choſen a more ſavage dwelling, nor

(c) Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Pliny tell us, that the marbles which ſerved for the lining of the pyramids, and the conſtruction of the paſſages, were brought from the mountains of Arabia. But as all the eaſtern part of Egypt between the Red Sea and the Nile was called Arabia, there is reaſon to believe that theſe beautiful ſtones came from the quarries I have been ſpeaking of. The plain was called *el Araba*, the waggons, from the quantity of carriages employed in tranſporting theſe enormous maſſes.

where they might be more remote from the intercourſe of mankind.

After paſſing a part of Mount Colzoum, we arrive at the monaſtery of St. Anthony: it has no gate; one enters by a window, into which the monks lift the traveller by means of a pulley. Theſe precautions are neceſſary to ſecure them from the plunder of the Arabs. A lofty and thick wall, a quarter of a league in circumference, forms the encloſure of it. A large garden, where various ſorts of fruit-trees are cultivated, occupies a part of it. In the other are to be ſeen the cells of the monks, and a ſmall church, where divine ſervice is celebrated. A canal, which receives the waters from the mountains, conveys them into the monaſtery. Though a little brackiſh, they ſupply the wants of life, and the culture of fruits and vegetables. The religious Copti who inhabit it devote themſelves to a moſt auſtere penance. They obſerve a rigid abſtinence, and drink wine only on the four great feſtivals of the year. A ſort of paſte, ſeaſoned with the oil of ſeſame, ſalt-fiſh, honey, and the produce

produce of their garden, conſtitute their food. Schiſm has corrupted the purity of their doctrine, and their obſtinate attachment to the errors of Monotheliſm is exceſſive. They imagine, however, they poſſeſs an abſolute empire over demons, ſerpents, and wild beaſts. Their ſuperior, when Father Sicard went to viſit them, was labouring at the philoſopher's ſtone. Amidſt a total renunciation of all the comforts of ſocial life, he was occupied in the reſearch for gold!

Theſe monks preſerve a great veneration for the grotto of St. Anthony; it is an obſcure habitation, dug out of the mountain, where that father of the monaſtic life lived as in a tomb, ſurrounded by ſhadows and deſarts. A rock of a league diameter, lofty and ſteep, ſeparates this convent from that of St. Paul. The impoſſibility of getting over it obliges one to make a circuit round the mountain, and it is two day's work to get at it. This monaſtery, built on the eaſtern ſide of mount Colzoum, is alſo inhabited by Copti, as miſerable, as pious, and as ignorant as the former.

Seated on the ſummit of Colzoum, the Red Sea is at one's feet; one diſcovers at a diſtance that extremity, towards which the chief of the Iſraelites is ſaid to have paſſed with all his people, between the ſuſpended waves; and to the ſouth-eaſt the famous hills of Oreb and of Sinai, where he received the tables of the law.

The ſight of theſe places leads to ſerious meditations. One contemplates around one's ſelf the countries whence have originated the great religions which alternately have reigned upon the earth. That of the Egyptians ſubſiſts no longer. The Jewiſh religion is not extinct, in ſpite of the diſgraces of that reprobated people. The Chriſtian and the Mahometan ſubſiſt from one end of the univerſe to the other. How fertile in wonders have been the countries, the mountains, the ſea, I am contemplating from this elevation! the hiſtory of nations is filled with them, and the barbarous inhabitants of theſe countries ſtill preſerve their memory.

Let us deſcend from mount Colzoum, and approach the Red Sea. Its ſhores are

covered

covered with innumerable ſhells, whoſe beauty, ſhape, and colours alternately attract our eyes. It is difficult to chooſe out of ſuch a variety. Marine plants cover the rocks; the waters are filled with corals, ſome white, and others red as ſcarlet. Join to theſe curious objects the variegated marbles of the mountains, the precious mines they contain, the plants which grow along the torrents, the rare flints with which the ſands are ſtrewed, and you will admit, that all theſe riches well deſerve the attention of a naturaliſt. But in truth, the knowledge of them muſt be purchaſed by ſo much fatigue and peril, one muſt be ſo long expoſed to the plunder of the Arabs, and to the burning heats of the ſun, that we ought not to be ſurpriſed, if no learned man has yet dared to ſurvey theſe deſarts. Let us quit them, Sir, and return to the Nile, whoſe banks are delicious, after ſuch a voyage.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

ROUTE FROM BAIAD TO ACHMOUNAIN.

Description of the towns and villages on both banks of the river. Delineation of their various aspects. Account of their government. Situation of the two branches which form the great canal of Bahr Ioufeph. *Description of the sacrifice made to the Sun, engraved on a rock near* Babain. *Reflections on this subject. Remarks on the principality of Melaoui, dependent on Mecca, and on the magnificent portico of Achmounain, with the adventure of Father Sicard.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE North wind that blows, Sir, invites us to purſue our voyage. One of the advantages of the ſituation of Egypt, is the enjoying this ſalutary wind more

more than nine months of the year. Beſide tempering the exceſſive heats, diſſipating the noxious vapours, and carrying into Abyſſinia the clouds whoſe diſſolution into rain occaſions the annual inundation of the Nile, it ſerves alſo to enable the boats to aſcend againſt the rapidity of the current. Let us take the advantage of this favourable gale, and ſail towards the Upper Thebais. Seated on the deck of our bark, borne on the waters, which are on a level with the banks, we have a full command of the adjacent country, and a new ſpectacle is every moment opening to our view. Already the minarets of *Beniſouef* loſe themſelves in the horizon. Other villages appear in ſight. Here *Berangieh* lies concealed under the ſhade of date-trees. On the other bank *Abou Emour* appears at the foot of the mountains. Further off ſtands *Bébé*, where the Copti preſerve the relics of Saint George, embelliſhed by the richneſs of the ſurrounding harveſts, for it preſents nothing but cottages with a ſmall moſque. To the eaſtward is the commence-

mencement of *Gebel Etteir (d)* the hill of birds. It derives its name from the multitude of kites, hawks, eagles, Pharaoh's fowls, and cormorants, which reſts there, to be in readineſs to fall upon their prey. The woods which border the foot of the rocks are inhabited by turtle-doves, and other ſmall birds. Flocks of ibiſes, cranes, ſwans and ſtorks, line the banks of the river, and cover the Nile during the winter. Flights of pigeons darken the air. They are more numerous in Egypt than in any other country on the earth. Every hamlet, and every town, forms a vaſt pigeon-houſe. Their excrement is carefully collected, to dung the melon plants.

The burgh of *Fachué*, called *Fenchi*, in the time of the Greeks, ſtands on the weſtern bank. The large iſland oppoſite, raiſes its verdant head above the waters. Various vegetables, cucumbers, and excellent melons, partly cover it. *Abou Girgé*,

(d) The birds of prey are very numerous, and various in Egypt, becauſe they are never killed, and they find plenty of food; ſmall birds are more ſcarce.

where

where the Copti have a convent, is not far from it. *Selevine* runs along the foot of the hill of birds. This ſide is inhabited by independent Arabs, who pillage every boat they can ſurpriſe, and when troops are ſent againſt them, they penetrate into the deſerts, whoſe ſources they alone are acquainted with, and where the Turks dare not follow them. When the ſtorm is over, they return in force to reſume their poſſeſſions. The traveller ſhould always be on his guard, march with arms, ſtand ſentry, fire muſket-ſhot from time to time during the night, and ſuffer no boat to come near his, otherwiſe he runs a great riſk of being robbed and murdered.

The eye naturally turns away from the eaſtern bank, lined with barren rocks, to repoſe itſelf on the teeming fields which appear to the weſtward. The earth is cultivated on that ſide to the very borders of the river. The iſle of *Sobra* contains a hamlet in a moſt beautiful poſition. It is placed amongſt the trees, in the middle of harveſts, of verdure, and of water. What

charming

charming habitations might a poliſhed people form in the iſlands of the Nile! The curious might there collect the trees of every warm climate. He might plant there whole woods of oranges, myrtles, pomegranates, and roſe-trees. The Arabian jeſſamine, the odoriferous ſhrubs, the magnolia of America, would grow wonderfully well there. The perfumed pine-apple, the banana, the orange, the moſt delicious fruits, would amply repay him for his labour. Surrounded by the arts, and by that nature which he would have embelliſhed, his happy days would glide away under the ſhade of enchanted thickets. Theſe, Sir, are only wiſhes thrown into the uncertainty of the future; but grant me, at leaſt, the conſolation of thinking, that they will one day be realized.

We arrive at the port of *Minieh*, a pretty conſiderable town. It is handſome, populous, and commercial. It is the reſidence of a Cachef. A cuſtom-houſe is eſtabliſhed here, and the boats which deſcend from the Saïd, are obliged to ſtop, and to pay a duty according to the merchandiſe

chandize they carry. We find here columns overturned, and the remains of ancient edifices. It is not improbable that they are the ruins of *(e) Cynopolis*, placed by Strabo and Ptolemy above *Fenchi*. The inhabitants of this city held the dog in great veneration. The prieſts nouriſhed them with ſacred meat, in honour of Anubis, the companion and guardian of Oſiris *(f)*. Strabo lays down *Oxyrinchus* at ſome diſtance from Cynopolis, in the interior of the country. Scattered marbles, and heaps of rubbiſh, lying round *Behneſe*, on Joſeph's canal, determine the poſition of that ancient city *(g)*, where the fiſh called oxyrinchus by the Greeks was looked upon as ſacred.

This long plain, which extends between the Nile and *Bahr Iouſeph*, is of the

(e) The city of Dogs.

(f) Strabo, l. 17.

(g) Mr. Pocock lays down *Oxyrinchus* in the ſpot occupied by *Girge*. This poſition does not appear to me exact, ſince Strabo poſitively ſays that *Oxyrinchus* was not on the banks of the Nile, but within the country.

greateſt

greateſt beauty. The corn, the barley, the flax, the beans, ſown in fields ſurrounded by rivulets, grow there in abundance. The dourra, and the ſugar-cane, riſe there to a great height. All the plants are vigorous and full of ſap; all the trees are loaded with fruit. The picture of abundance continually recreates the ſight; but it is diſfigured by the appearance of the peaſant covered with rags, and thoſe earthen huts where he ſhuts himſelf up a prey to miſery, after bedewing with the ſweat of his brow, the rich harveſt he has been gathering, but not for him. It is true then that wholeſome laws do more for the happineſs of nations, than all the treaſures of nature.

The village of Gerabié is oppoſite to *Minieh*. Higher up is the burgh of *Saouadi*. It is here that the grottoes of the Thebais commence, ſo famous for the auſterity of the anchorites, who retired thither in the firſt ages of the church. They extend the ſpace of twenty leagues, even over againſt *Manfelout*. They are quarries dug

dug by the Egyptians, and the hieroglyphics one ſees on them confirm their antiquity.

A foreſt of date-trees begins above *Saouadi*, and deſcends to the bank of the river. The iſle of *Sobra* is at no great diſtance from it. Villages continually ſucceed each other. Their contiguity, the variety of their aſpects, the number of their inhabitants, render the landſcapes entirely lively, and highly diverſified. Near to *Rodda* one diſtinguiſhes the entrance of one of the branches of *Babr Iouſeph*: the other is higher up at the village of *Tarout Echcherif*. Mr. Norden has only laid down the former, and Father Sicard only the latter; they ſtill ſubſiſt.

Deſcending the canal of *Rodda*, whoſe banks are charming, we enter into the great bed of *Babr Iouſeph*, on the ſide of which ſtands the village of *Abouſir*. A league to the ſouthward, we croſs the ruins of an ancient town, from the remains of which the burgh of *Babain* has enriched itſelf. At ſome diſtance beyond it our attention is fixed by a curious monument.

It

It is a rock ſmoothed with the point of the chiſel, in the depth of which a grotto of fifty feet diameter, and ſix deep, is hewn. The bottom repreſents a ſacrifice offered to the ſun. This luminary is there ſculptured in *demi-relievo*. On the right two prieſts, decorated with pointed caps, lift up their arms towards him, and touch with their fingers the extremity of his rays. Behind them, two children with their heads dreſſed in the ſame manner, hold in their hands full cups, deſtined for the libations. Three piles, ſupported by ſeven vaſes with their handles, and placed below the ſun, bear on their ſummits ſlaughtered lambs. On the left we diſcover two young girls, attached only to the ſtone by the feet and back. The Arabs have knocked off their heads, and diſfigured them with their lances. Various hieroglyphics compoſe, undoubtedly, the hiſtory of this ſacrifice, which I imagine was an offering to Jupiter Ammon, a ſymbolical divinity, by which the ancient Egyptians denoted the ſun entering the ſign of the ram. This animal was conſecrated to him, and the com-

commencement of the aſtronomical year, and the renewal of the light, was celebrated by this circumſtance. This monument, hewn out of a hard ſtone, muſt paſs to the lateſt poſterity.

Near to *Babain* is *Touna (b)*. Between this village and that of Abouſir we trace the ruins of an ancient aqueduct of brick, which conveyed the waters to the foot of the mountains. Keeping along the banks of *Bahr Iouſeph*, we arrive at *Tarout Eccherif*, where this great canal has its principal entrance. *Melaoui* is three leagues diſtant from it to the north. It is a handſome town, ſituated in a fertile plain. There is a conſiderable market here. Every article is to be met with in abundance, and at a very low price. *Malaoui* and ſeveral villages which ſurround it, compoſe a ſmall principality, which was formerly given to Mecca. The *Emir Haji*, or the Prince of the caravan, had the privilege of ſending

(b) This is the city called by Strabo the Upper *Tanis*, and near to which he lays down the courſe of the great canal. Here are the ruins of a temple of the ſun.

thither a *Sandar (i)* to govern it. The latter ſends to Grand Cairo conſiderable tributes in grain, which he draws from the inhabitants, and the *Emir Haji* conveys them to the Cherif of Mecca.

The village of *Achmounain*, four miles to the north of *Melaoui*, is remarkable for the ruins it contains. Amongſt the heaps of rubbiſh it is ſurrounded with, one admires a ſuperb portico, that has ſuffered nothing from time. It is one hundred feet long, twenty-five wide, and is ſupported by twelve columns, which have only a plain faſcia by way of capital. Each column is compoſed of three blocks of granite, forming in all ſixty feet in height, by twenty-five in circumference. The block which reſts upon the baſe is ſimply rounded, and loaded with hieroglyphics, which commence with a pyramid. The two others are fluted. The columns are ten feet diſtant from each other, except the two middle ones, which,

(i) *Sandar* ſignifies governor and general of the army; the perſon inveſted with this character unites the civil and military power.

ſerving

ſerving for the entrance, leave between them an interval of fifteen feet. Ten enormous ſtones cover the whole extent of the portico. Over them is a double row. The two middle ones, which riſe in the form of a pediment, ſurpaſs the others in height and thickneſs. One is ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the ſight of theſe maſſes of rocks that the art of man has been able to elevate to the height of ſixty feet. The frieze which goes round it, is covered with hieroglyphics very well carved. We ſee the figures of birds, of inſects, of men ſeated, to whom others ſeem to make offerings, and different ſorts of animals. This is probably the hiſtory of the time, the place, and the deity in whoſe honour this monument was raiſed. The portico was painted red and blue. Theſe colours are effaced in many places; but the lower part of the architrave which ſurrounds the colonnade, has preſerved a gold colour aſtoniſhingly lively. It is the ſame with the ceiling, where the ſtars of gold ſhine upon an azure ſky with a dazzling bril-

liancy. This monument, conſtructed before the conqueſt of the Perſians, has neither the elegance, nor the purity of the Grecian architecture; but its ſolidity, which it ſeems impoſſible to deſtroy, its awful ſimplicity, and its majeſty, command admiration. What ideas muſt we entertain of the temple, or the palace, of which this announced the entry? I will confeſs to you, Sir, that one cannot but be greatly ſurpriſed at finding amidſt Arabian and Turkiſh huts, edifices which ſeem to have been the works of genii. Their antiquity ſtill adds to their eſtimation. Eſcaped from the ravages of deſtructive conquerors, ſtamped with the impreſſion of ages, they impoſe a ſort of veneration on the contemplating traveller. The modern Egyptians behold with indifference theſe beautiful remains of antiquity, and ſuffer them to ſubſiſt, only becauſe it would be too expenſive to deſtroy them. Superſtition and ignorance lead them to imagine, that they contain treaſures; accordingly, they do not permit travellers to take a faithful drawing of them.

them. One expoſes one's life in making the attempt. I ſhall relate to you what happened to Father Sicard whilſt he was admiring the beauty of the portico of *Achmounain*. "Light not your cenſer," ſays the Arab his conductor gravely to him, "for fear we ſhould be ſurprized in the "fact, and that we ſuffer for it."—"What "do you mean? I have neither cenſer, nor "fire, nor incenſe."—"You laugh at me; "a ſtranger like you would not come here "merely from curioſity.—And what then? "—I know that by your ſkill you are ac- "quainted with the place where the great "cheſt full of gold is hid, which our fa- "thers left us. If your cenſer was ſeen, "it would ſoon be imagined that you "came here to open our cheſt by your "magic words, and carry off our trea- "ſure."

Such, Sir, is the general opinion of the modern Egyptians, with reſpect to the Europeans. They look upon us all as magicians, and imagine that by taking only the dimenſions of their antiquities, we have

the power of carrying off their treaſures. Accordingly, they never ſee you write, or take drawings, without anxiety, and they prevent it as much as poſſible.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY FROM ACHMOUNAIN TO ACHMIM.

Deſcription of Enfiné, *heretofore Antinoé, built by Adrian, in honour of his favourite Antinous. Extent of that city. Columns and gates remaining there of a beautiful architecture. Theſe monuments not comparable with the portico of* Achmounain. *Details on the principal towns ſituated on the banks of the Nile, with the comparative geography of their ancient and modern poſition. Deſcription of* Achmim, *formerly* Chemmis *or* Panopolis. *Remarks on the remains of the ancient temple ſtill ſubſiſting in the time of Abulfeda, and on the ſerpent* Harridi, *with which the Mahometan prieſts deceive the people.*

To Mr. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

LET us quit the portico of *Achmounain*, and croſs the Nile, to viſit the remains

of *Antinoé*. Abulfeda gives us the following account of it *(k)*: "*Enfiné*, (the name "given it by the Arabs), contains remarkable ruins of ancient monuments. It is "ſituated towards the middle of the Saïd, "to the eaſt of the Nile, and is dependent "on the province of *Achmounain*, which is "on the other ſide. It is an ancient city," adds the geographer of Nubia, "ſurrounded by a well-cultivated country, abounding in fruits and harveſts. It is vulgarly "called the city of the Magi *(l)*, becauſe it "is from thence that Pharaoh made them "come to his court."

I ſhall add ſome particulars to what are mentioned by thoſe geographers, in order to make you better acquainted with the pre-

(k) Abulfeda, deſcription of Egypt.

(l) Antinoé was built near the ruins of Abydus, where the Egyptians revered the oracle of the God Beſa. This oracle, one of the moſt ancient of Egypt, was ſtill famous in the time of the Emperor Conſtantius. Ammianus Marcellinus, book 19. ſays, that all the neighbouring people went to conſult him, and aſſembled at a certain period to celebrate feſtivals in his honour. This is the reaſon why the Arabs call Antinoé, ſituated near Abydus, the city of the Magi.

ſent

ſent ſtate of theſe places. Adrian, whoſe ſhameful vices tarniſhed the ſplendor of the moſt brilliant qualities, having loſt his favourite Antinous in a journey in Egypt, wiſhed to erect a laſting monument to his memory. He founded a city of his name; he marked out the plan upon an even ſoil, and built it with a royal magnificence. It was half a league in circumference; two principal ſtreets, of forty-five feet wide, which interſected each other at right angles, traverſed its whole extent. The others were narrower, but equally ſtraight. The two largeſt terminated by four gates, ſome of which ſtill ſubſiſt; the handſomeſt has three vaulted entries; that of the middle is forty feet high, by twenty-two in width, and twenty thick; the other two are ſmaller. Each of the façades of this edifice is ornamented with four pilaſtres in *bas relief*, the Corinthian capitals of which, with the leaf of the acanthus, have a conſiderable projection. This beautiful gate was ſurrounded by eight Corinthian columns, of the ſame height with itſelf. One only has eſcaped the ravages of time, and of men; the

the reſt are either mutilated or deſtroyed; but the pedeſtals remain entire. Beſides this edifice, one diſcovers in different quarters of the town, heaps of rubbiſh, which announce temples or palaces deſtroyed. If we may judge from the diſtances of the pedeſtals along the ſtreets, they were bordered by a colonnade, which formed a portico on each ſide, and allowed the inhabitants to walk ſheltered from the ſun. This architecture muſt have formed a charming coup-d'œil. Beſides theſe embelliſhments, one of the ſquares was ornamented with four large pillars of the Corinthian order, three of which have periſhed; their baſes alone remain. The fourth is in perfect preſervation; it is about fifty feet high. The ſhaft is compoſed of ſeveral ſtones. On the firſt is carved an ornament of oak leaves. One reads on the pedeſtal a Greek inſcription, half effaced *(m)*, which

(m) This inſcription begins with theſe words: *To the proſperity of the Emperor Cæſar, Marcus Aurelius Severus, Alexander, pious, happy. . . . . Aurelius being præfect of the new Greeks of Antinoé, &c.* We read it on two of the pedeſtals; it is almoſt obliterated on the two

which dedicates it to the emperor Alexander Severus. The ſenate of Alexandria, loaded with his bounty, had already erected to him the famous column I have ſo much talked of to you; it elevated theſe other four in his honour, after his triumphs over the Perſians; for the foliage of oak which crowns the baſe of that which ſubſiſts, was the ſign of victory amongſt the Romans. Such, Sir, are the beſt preſerved monuments to be remarked amongſt the ruins of *Antinoé*. Did not the inſcriptions, and the teſtimonies of hiſtorians make known the founder of this city, the arches of the gates *(n)*, the capitals of the pillars, the deficiency of hieroglyphics would inform us, that it is not the work of the Egyptians. We admire in them that taſte, that elegance, the Romans learnt from the Greeks; but we do not behold

two others. See Father Sicard, *Lettres Edifiantes*; who gives this inſcription in Greek.

(n) In none of the monuments remaining to us of ancient Egypt, do we ſee an arch or column of any of the Grecian orders, but ſtones of an aſtoniſhing ſize, covered with hieroglyphics.

that

that majeſty, that ſolidity, that marvellous grandeur which the people of Egypt knew how to ſtamp on their monuments, and which other nations have never been able to attain. The remains of Antinoé, in ſpite of their magnificence, are very trifling in compariſon with the portico of *Achmounain*, though it be fifteen hundred years older.

Near to this city are the ruins of the ancient *Abydus*, where men reſorted to conſult the oracle of the God Beſa. A convent of derviſes, called *Cheik Abaide*, ſtands on its ſite. Towards the end of the fourth century, Antinoé was peopled by Chriſtians. Palladius aſſures us, that there were twelve convents of virgins there, and ſeveral others inhabited by Monks. It is perhaps to this prodigious increaſe of celibacy within ſo ſmall a town, that its ruin may be attributed.

There are ſtill ſeveral Coptic monaſteries in the environs, the monks of which paſs their time in miſery and ignorance. The fertile plains, which, according to the Nubian geographer, ſurrounded *Enſiné*, have diſappeared

diſappeared with their inhabitants, and given place to ſands and deſarts.

Let us re-imbark, Sir, and aſcend the great river. Behold in that mountain to the eaſt, that range of grottoes, heretofore inhabited by pious anchorites. The hiſtory of the church has celebrated their abſtinence. Fruit, bread, and water, compoſed their nouriſhment. This auſtere and contemplative life is leſs ſurpriſing in a warm climate, where temperance in eating and drinking is a matter of neceſſity, and contemplation an enjoyment. From their cells they diſcovered the Nile, the groves, the harveſts, and that crowd of boats which navigate on it day and night. But what is aſtoniſhing, is, that they ſhould have had the reſolution to remain idle their whole lives in the midſt of that perpetual movement, the ſpectacle of which they had continually before their eyes. Theſe grottoes extend as far as *Manfelout*. This little town, ſituated to the weſt, in the middle of a fertile country, is governed by a Cachef. The Turks have different moſques there. Oppoſite to it appears a Coptic convent,

vent, into which one mounts by a pulley; a precaution the monks are obliged to make uſe of, againſt the rapacious Arabs.

The burgh of *Salaem* ſhews itſelf at a diſtance by its lofty pigeon-houſes of a ſquare form. A little higher we coaſt along an iſland of ſome length, and enter a creek of the Nile which leads to *Siout (o)*. This is a large town, well built, and very populous. A lake is dug there, from which they water the grounds. The gardens abound with vegetables and fruit trees. Its ſituation on an artificial eminence, apprizes us that it is built on the ſite of an ancient town. Accordingly we diſcover the veſtiges of *Lycopolis*, where the wolf was regarded as a ſacred animal.

Aboutig is on the ſame ſide, at half a league from the river. It is a very gay

(*o*) Pocock thinks that *Siout* is the ſame with *Anteopolis*. He is miſtaken: *Anteopolis* is laid down by Ptolemy higher up, and on the other bank.

Strabo, lib. 17, places Lycopolis above the canal which throws itſelf into lake *Tanis*. This is a fault of the copyiſt; we ſhould read, lake *Mæris*.

little

little town. It ſtands on the ſite of *Abotis*, mentioned by Stephen of Byzantium. The Turks ſtill cultivate here, as in the time of Abulfeda *(q)*, the poppy, from which they make opium. The rich take it with voluptuouſneſs, to procure themſelves agreeable viſions. The common people content themſelves with taking faſting, little balls of the leaf of hemp chopped, which produce the ſame effects. *Aboutig* is governed by an Emir. The yoke of theſe Arabian princes is not ſo heavy as that of the Beys. Under their empire the people enjoy more tranquillity, and are leſs expoſed to the ravages of the undiſciplined troops of Cairo; nay, one often finds in theſe old men that impartial juſtice, that humanity, that affecting tenderneſs, with which the ancient patriarchs ruled their families.

The burgh of *Setteſé*, above *Aboutig*, repreſents the ſmall city of Apollo. It is ſituated inland, and is partly inhabited by Copti. During the travels of Father Si-

(q) Abulfeda, deſcription of Egypt.

card,

card, a very ſingular accuſation was formed againſt him (r). Two Chriſtians of the country came to the governor, and told him that this ſtranger was preparing to nail up the banks of the Nile with magic nails, and to divert the inundation by his enchantments. This declaration greatly embarraſſed the Arab prince. He would have apprehended the learned miſſionary, had not a Janiſſary, who travelled with him, become reſponſible for his perſon, and maintained, that the Copti were calumniators. This anecdote is ſufficient to give you an idea of the ignorance and ſuperſtition of the modern Egyptians.

Amongſt the numerous villages which border on the Nile, we remark *Thémé*, governed by a Cachef, and oppoſite to a large iſland, the aſpect of which is delightful. On the other ſide, *Silin*, anciently *Selinon*, hides itſelf at the foot of the mountains. *Kau Elkebire* preſents nothing but a miſerable burgh built on the ruins of *Anteopolis*. This city contained the magnificent tem-

(r) Lettres edifiantes.

ple,

ple, which the Egyptians, according to Diodorus Siculus, built in honour of Antæus, who was overcome by Hercules. No part of it is remaining but the portico, ſupported by huge columns, and covered with large ſtones. One of them may be diſtinguiſhed, thirty feet long by five wide. The ceiling, painted with gold and azure, has preſerved the livelineſs of its colours. The Turks have converted it into a ſtable, where they collect their herds. Accordingly, this magnificent portico is full of filth. Such is the value they annex to the moſt beautiful works of antiquity.

On the eaſtern bank we meet with a chain of villages, *Coum elarab*, *Mechta*, and *Chabtoura*, over againſt *Zein Eddin*. A branch of the Nile incloſes the burgh of *Tatha*, governed by a Cachef. Nothing can be more agreeable than the adjacent plains, freſher than their verdure, nor richer than their harveſts. They owe theſe advantages to the waters of the river which ſurround them. The city of Venus, on whoſe ruins *Tatha* is built, could not have been better placed. Above *Tatha*

we coaſt along the iſle of *Chandouil*, and at length diſcover on the edge of the horizon, the lofty minarets of *Achmim*.

"Achmim," ſays Abulfeda, "is a large "town of Upper Egypt, ſituated on the "eaſtern bank of the Nile. One ad- "mires there a temple, which is com- "parable to the moſt celebrated mo- "numents of antiquity. It is conſtructed "with ſtones of a ſurpriſing ſize, on "which are ſculptured innumerable fi- "gures. Doulnoun *(s)* was a native of "Achmim." Though this town be fallen from its ancient ſplendor, it is ſtill one of the moſt beautiful of Upper Egypt. An Arab prince commands there. The police is well attended to. The ſtreets are wide and clean, and commerce and agriculture flouriſh. It has a manufactory of cotton, ſtuffs, and pottery, which are conveyed over all Egypt. It is the ſame that

(s) This Doulnoun has written a treatiſe called *Elmejarebat*, the Experiments, a copy of which is certainly amongſt the manuſcripts in the king's library.

Hero-

Herodotus *(t)* calls *Chemmis*, and Strabo *Panopolis (u)*. It has loſt its ancient edifices, and much of its extent, ſince the ruins of the temple, deſcribed by Abulfeda, are without its limits, to the north. Nothing remains of it but ſome ſtones, ſo large that the Turks have not been able to move them. They are covered with hieroglyphics, and one of them of an extraordinary ſculpture. There are traced on it four concentric circles, in a ſquare. The innermoſt of theſe contains a ſun. The two ſucceeding ones, divided into twelve parts, contain, one, twelve birds, the other, twelve animals almoſt effaced, which appear to be the ſigns of the zodiac. The fourth has no diviſions, and preſents twelve human figures *(x)*. The four ſeaſons occupy

(t) Herodotus ſays, that Perſeus was a native of this city, and that his deſcendents have eſtabliſhed feſtivals there in his honour.

(u) The city of Pan. This god was worſhipped here.

(x) I imagine theſe figures repreſent the twelve gods, the twelve months of the year, the twelve ſigns of the zodiac. The Egyptians, ſays Herodotus, are

cupy the angles of the ſquare, on the ſide of which may be diſtinguiſhed a globe with wings. It is probable that this ſtone belonged to a temple dedicated to the ſun, that the whole of theſe hieroglyphics marks his paſſage into the ſigns of the zodiac, and his courſe, whoſe revolution forms the year. This ſtone is a proof that the Egyptians poſſeſſed aſtronomical knowledge from the moſt remote antiquity. The columns of this temple have been partly broken to make lime, and millſtones. Some of them have been tranſported into one of the moſques of *Achmim*, where they are placed without taſte; others are heaped up in the ſquares of this town.

I cannot leave *Achmim*, Sir, without telling you of a ſerpent which is the wonder of the country. Upwards of a century ago, a religious Turk called *Scheilk Haridi* died here. He paſſed for a ſaint among the Mahometans. They raiſed a monument to him, covered with a cupola, at the foot of the mountain. The people

the firſt who divided the year into twelve months, and employed the names of the twelve gods. *Book ſecond.*

flocked

flocked from all parts to offer up their prayers to him. One of their prieſts, adroitly profiting by their credulity, perſuaded them that God had made the ſoul of *Scheik Haridi* paſs into the body of a ſerpent. Many of theſe are found in the Thebais, which are harmleſs. He had taught one to obey his voice. He appeared with his ſerpent, dazzled the vulgar by his ſurpriſing tricks, and pretended to cure all diſorders. Some lucky inſtances of ſucceſs due to nature alone, and ſometimes to the imagination of the patients, gave him great celebrity. He ſoon confined his ſerpent *Haridi* to the tomb, producing him only to oblige princes, and perſons capable of giving him a handſome recompenſe. The ſucceſſors of this prieſt, brought up in the ſame principles, found no difficulty in giving ſanction to ſo advantageous an error. They added to the general perſuaſion of his virtue, that of his immortality. They had the boldneſs even to make a public proof of it. The ſerpent was cut in pieces in preſence of the Emir, and placed for two hours under a vaſe. At the inſtant of lifting up the

vaſe,

vaſe, the prieſts, no doubt, had the addreſs to ſubſtitute one exactly reſembling it. A miracle was proclaimed, and the immortal Haridi acquired a freſh degree of conſideration. This knavery procures them great advantages. The people flock from all quarters to pray at this tomb; and if the ſerpent crawls out from under the ſtone, and approaches the ſuppliant, it is a ſign that his malady will be cured. You may imagine, that he does not appear till an offering has been made proportioned to the quality and riches of the different perſons. In extraordinary caſes, where the ſick perſon cannot be cured without the preſence of the ſerpent, a *pure virgin* muſt come to ſolicit him. To avoid inconveniencies on this head, they take care to chooſe a *very young girl indeed*. She is decked out in her beſt clothes, and crowned with flowers. She puts herſelf in a praying attitude, and as the prieſts are inclined, the ſerpent comes out, makes circles round the young ſuppliant, and goes and repoſes on her. The virgin, accompanied by a vaſt multitude, carries him in triumph, amidſt of the gene-

ral

ral acclamation. No human reaſoning would perſuade theſe ignorant and credulous Egyptians that they are the dupes of a few impoſtors. They believe in the ſerpent Haridi, as firmly as in the prophet. The Chriſtians of the country have no more doubts of his virtue, than the Turks; but they maintain that this ſerpent is the dæmon Aſmodeus, who ſlew the ſeven huſbands of Tobit's wife, brought by the angel Raphael to this place, after metamorphoſing him, and that God makes uſe of him to deceive the infidels. The ſerpent has played a very aſtoniſhing part in the hiſtory of mankind. He ſeduced Eve. By the order of Moſes, he devoured thoſe of the Egyptians. He made Alexander of Abonotica paſs for a god. He cures at this day the inhabitants of Achmim.

This ſerpent is of the kind deſcribed by Herodotus, and which were held ſacred in ancient Egypt. They were called *Agatho daimon*, Good Genius, and they were the emblem of *Cneph*, a ſymbolical Deity, who denoted the Divine Goodneſs.

I have the honour to be, &c.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.